

Jihad in the West: The Threat Posed by Salafist Terrorism to the United States and
Western Europe

Research Thesis

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by

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Abstract

There are two main types of jihadi terrorism that have plagued the Western world in the post 9/11 era: Organized attacks planned by an established terrorist groups and homegrown attacks carried out by unaffiliated individuals. A fundamentalist interpretation of Islam known as Salafism is used as a starting point and inspiration for such organizations and individuals to commit jihadist violence against the West. Terrorist organizations that use a Salafist interpretation of Islam have had the largest presence in the post-9/11 world such as Al-Qaeda and their affiliates and the Islamic State and their affiliates. This project aims to find out the overall threat Salafist terrorism poses to the United States and Western Europe as well as the threat of each type of terrorism in these regions. Secondary sources ranging from subjects on Muslim immigration to Europe to common trends in attacks that have occurred on Western soil since 9/11 will be used extensively to accurately calculate the threat of each type of attack. The Global Terrorism Database will also be used to extract valuable data over target locations, types of weapons used, and casualties per attacks. In addition, primary sourced documents, such as Al-Qaeda's *Inspire*, and the Islamic State's *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* dating from 2010-2017, will be analyzed to gain insight into the type of education being put out to radicalize and "train" lone actors to commit acts of terrorism. While the overall threat is small, but not negligible, Western Europe is shown to be under a far greater threat than that of the United States. Western Europe, due to a number of political and geographical reasons, is more at risk of organized group attacks than the United States while small, homegrown terrorism pose a greater threat to the United States. This research presents an accurate threat-assessment of two main types of attacks of Salafist terrorism in order to cut through political and media hyperbole and give future researchers and politicians a sound source and conclusion to create educated policy from.

Forward

A Nice, Nonviolent Person

On November 28, 2016, A crisp, late-autumn day at The Ohio State University was violently interrupted by a crash, screams, and three gunshots. Abdul Razak Ali Artan, an eighteen-year-old Somali transfer student, drove a Honda Civic into the courtyard of Watts Hall on The Ohio State University's Columbus campus. After striking students and faculty in the courtyard, Artan emerged from the vehicle brandishing a butcher's knife and attacked confused and fleeing students and faculty. Ohio State police officer Alan Horujko, who was responding to a gas leak near Watts Hall, shot and killed Artan within a minute of the start of the attack. Artan was the only involved person killed and 11 others were injured with only one being placed in critical condition.¹



The aftermath of the attack at Ohio State University

susinated an intelligence colonel using a silenced handgun in the city of 'Adan.

America

On the 29th of Safar, a soldier of the Islamic State, our brother 'Abdur-Razaq 'Ali Artan ra, carried out an attack at Ohio State University that led to 11 kafir Americans being wounded. He ran over several of them with his vehicle, before attacking a number of others with his knife. The attack was carried out in response to the Islamic State's call to target the citizens of the nations involved in the Crusader coalition. Prior to carrying out his blessed operation, 'Abdur-Razaq ra left the following message:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Gracious.

My brothers and sisters, I am sick and tired of seeing my fellow Muslim brothers and sisters being killed and tortured everywhere. Seeing my fellow Muslims being tortured, raped, and killed in Burma led to a boiling point. I can't take it anymore.

America, stop interfering with the Muslim Ummah. We are not weak. We are not weak, remember that. If you want us Muslims to stop carrying out "jone wolf" attacks, then make peace with the Islamic State. Make a pact or a treaty with them where you promise to leave them alone, you and your fellow apostate allies. By Allah, we will not let you sleep unless you give peace to the Muslims. I am warning you, O America! And, a message to the Muslims, don't listen to celebrity scholars who sold their religion. I am talking about

the likes of Yaqir Qadhi, Omar Saifuddin, Nouman Ali Khan, Mufti Munk, and the list goes on. Beware of AlMaghribi Institute. Listen instead to our hero Imam Anwar al-Awlaki.

Let me ask you this question: If Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Sahabah were here today, wouldn't the western media call them "terrorists"? To conclude: By Allah, I am willing to kill a billion infidels in retribution for a single Muslim or Muslimah.



The mujahid, 'Abdur-Razaq 'Ali Artan ra.

RUMIYAH 37

Figure 1

Shortly after the attack, the Islamic State claimed responsibility and even did a feature on Artan in their fourth edition of their online magazine Rumiya². *Figure 1* showcases the article. Artan, however, had no direct affiliation with the Islamic State and their claim of him is nothing more than an attempt to raise fear and maintain their relevance. Despite this, Artan, his radicalization,

¹ Staff, WLWT Digital. "Terrorism Suspected in Car-and-Knife Attack at Ohio State." WLWT, January 4, 2017. <https://www.wlwt.com/article/active-shooter-alert-issued-by-ohio-state-university/8371592>.

² "Military and Covert Operations." *Rumiya*, 2016 Issue 4 (37).

and his attack is representative of the “lone wolf” phenomena that has emerged in the United States and Western Europe.

Artan and his family immigrated to the United States in 2014 after being vetted by the State Department and found themselves in Dallas, Texas. The Catholic Charities of Dallas helped the family of eight (a single mother and seven children) adjust to the United States by providing language and job skills.³ The family then moved to Columbus, Ohio for unknown reasons after just 23 days in Dallas. David Woodward, the CEO of the Catholic Charities of Dallas, claimed there was nothing unusual in the family’s file that would indicate potential radical or violent activity.⁴ After moving to Columbus, Artan attended Columbus State Community College, graduated cum laude, and then moved to The Ohio State University for the Autumn 2016 semester. No report from Columbus State indicated disciplinary or behavioral issues.⁵

However, with less than a week into his first semester at Ohio State, Artan began to feel isolated from what he perceived as a result of his Islamic faith. Artan was interviewed by the school newspaper *The Lantern* in a segment called “Humans of Ohio State.”⁶ In the interview, Artan had this to say.

“I just transferred from Columbus State. We had prayer rooms, like actual rooms where we could go to pray because we Muslims have to pray five times a day... This place [Ohio State] is huge, and I don’t even know where to pray. I wanted to pray in the open,

³ CNN, Darran Simon. “Ohio State Attacker Said He Was ‘scared’ to Pray in Public.” CNN. Accessed November 30, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/28/us/ohio-state-attacker-abdul-razak-ali-artan/index.html>.

⁴ CNN, “Ohio State Attacker Said He Was ‘scared’ to Pray in Public.”

⁵ CNN, “Ohio State Attacker Said He Was ‘scared’ to Pray in Public.”

⁶ CNN, “Ohio State Attacker Said He Was ‘scared’ to Pray in Public.”

but I was kind of scared with everything going on in the media. I'm a Muslim, its not what the media portrays me to be. If people looks at me, a Muslim praying, I don't know what they're going to think, what's going to happen.”⁷

Despite what appears to be a very self-aware and innocent thought-process of American-Muslim relations, Artan grew increasingly discontent with the treatment of Muslims at the hands of the United States and cited atrocities like the treatment of Muslims of Myanmar on his social media accounts.⁸ In addition, Artan's claim that Ohio State was not accommodative to Muslims with prayer rooms is blatantly false. Mahamud Kassin, a graduate from Ohio State in 2014, commented on Artan's claim, “It's a nonsense excuse. Every library has a place where you can worship.”⁹ Shortly before the attack, Artan posted this message on his Facebook account.

“In the name of Allah, the most merciful and most gracious.

(Screenshot this before it gets deleted)

My brothers and sisters, I am sick and tired of seeing my fellow Muslims brother and sisters being filled and tortured EVERYWHERE. Seeing my fellow Muslims being tortured, raped and killed in Burma led to a boiling point. I can't take it anymore.

America! Stop interfering with other countries, especially the Muslim Ummah. We are not weak. We are not weak, remember that.

If you want us Muslims to stop carrying out lone wolf attacks, then make peace with 'dawla in al sham.' Make a pact or a treaty with them where you promise to leave them alone, you and your apostate allies.

⁷ Pan, Jay, and iker. “From the Archives: Ohio State Attacker Featured in ‘Humans of Ohio State.’” *The Lantern*. Accessed November 30, 2018. <https://www.thelantern.com/2016/11/from-the-archives-ohio-state-attacker-featured-in-humans-of-ohio-state/>.

⁸ CNN, “Ohio State Attacker Said He Was ‘scared’ to Pray in Public.”

⁹ Smith, Mitch, Rukmini Callimachi, and Richard Pérez-Peña. “ISIS Calls Ohio State University Attacker a ‘Soldier.’” *The New York Times*, December 22, 2017, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/29/us/ohio-state-university-abdul-artan-islamic-state.html>.

By Allah, we will not let you sleep unless you give peace to the Muslims. You will not celebrate or enjoy any holiday.

Stop the killing of the Muslims in Burma.

Btw, every single Muslim who disapproves of my actions is a sleeper cell, waiting for a signal. I am warning you. Oh America!

And, a message to the Muslims, don't listen to celebrity scholars who sold their deen. I am talking to the likes of Yasir Qadhi, Omar Sulieman, Nouman, Mufti Menk and the list goes on. Beware of the Al-Maghrib institute. Listen instead to our hero imam Anwar Al-Awlaki.

Let me ask you this questions, if the Muhammad peace and blessings upon him and his Shahaba were here today, wouldn't Western media call them terrorists?

To conclude,

By Allah, I am willing to kill a billion infidels in retribution for a single DISABLED Muslim/Muslima

(Screenshot this before it gets deleted)''¹⁰

Artan's epithet is more of a mess of incoherent ramblings rather than any devotion to a particular ideology or terrorist organization. In addition, the Islamic State's claim is really baseless since Artan mentions Anwar al-Awlaki, a prominent Al-Qaeda scholar, in his Facebook post. Despite what appears to be nothing more than a general anger and frustration based in hyperbolic assumptions, Artan's case is representative of the phenomena of lone wolf attacks. This "quiet, intelligent, young man... the kind of guy who knows his content before class"¹¹ ultimately came out of nowhere and it was only through the swift response from law enforcement no innocent people were killed in this attack.

¹⁰ Menahan, Chris. "Read the Full Text of Somali Refugee Terrorist Abdul Razak Ali Artan's Facebook Rant." InformationLiberation. Accessed November 30, 2018. <http://www.informationliberation.com/?id=55900>.

¹¹ Smith, Callimachi, and Pérez-Peña, "ISIS Calls Ohio State University Attacker a 'Soldier.'"

One Blue Suitcase

On May 22, 2017, a conglomerate of young children, their parents, and fans of pop music enjoyed themselves at Ariana Grande's Dangerous Woman tour at the Manchester Arena when a blast shook the entire venue.¹² A twenty-two year old British Libyan Muslim named Salman Abedi in a suicide attack detonated a blue suitcase packed with homemade explosives, screws, and nails in the foyer of the arena. Twenty-two people were killed (not including the attacker), twelve of which were under the age of sixteen.¹³ In addition, as of May 2018, over 800 people have been declared casualties with injuries ranging from dismembered limbs to psychological trauma.¹⁴ The Islamic State quickly claimed responsibility of the attack because, unlike the Ohio State attacker¹⁵, Abedi had direct ties to the Islamic State and it has been determined he acted on behalf of the organization.

Salman Abedi was born in 1994 to Libyan refugee parents in a Muslim household in the United Kingdom. Abedi had a relatively normal upbringing attending a boy's school and Salford University before dropping out prior to the attack. Although he had a pleasant disposition and was described as "normal" and "friendly,"¹⁶ Abedi's young adult life contained a number of red

¹² May 23, CBS/AP, 2017, and 12:45 Am. "UK Police: 22 Confirmed Dead after Terror Incident at Ariana Grande Concert." Accessed November 30, 2018.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ariana-grande-concert-manchester-arena-explosion/>.

¹³ Dearden, Lizzie. "The Real Reason Isis Is Claiming Responsibility for the Manchester Attack." The Independent, May 23, 2017. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/manchester-bombing-isis-responsibility-salman-abedi-ariana-grande-concert-shock-awe-tactics-syria-a7752056.html>.

¹⁴ "Manchester Arena Attack: Bomb 'injured More than 800' - BBC News." Accessed November 30, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-manchester-44129386>.

¹⁵ Dearden, "The Real Reason Isis Is Claiming Responsibility for the Manchester Attack."

¹⁶ Evans, Martin, Victoria Ward, Robert Mendick, Ben Farmer, Hayley Dixon, and Danny Boyle. "Everything We Know about Manchester Suicide Bomber Salman Abedi." *The Telegraph*, May 26, 2017. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/26/everything-know-manchester-suicide-bomber-salman-abedi/>.

flags. Abedi attended the Didsbury Mosque in Manchester where he reportedly made a “face of hate” after the Sheikh made a denouncement of terrorism.¹⁷ In addition, he made multiple trips in 2011 to Libya with his father to assist in the fight to overthrow Muammar Gaddafi. In the ensuing breakdown of the country, Abedi made a number of contacts with the Islamic State affiliate Katibat al-Batter al-Libi. It has been assessed by British intelligence officials that Abedi underwent explosives training at the hands of the Islamic State affiliate.¹⁸

Abedi made multiple movements with the blue suitcase around Manchester in the four days leading up to the attack according to Greater Manchester Police. In addition to the contacts made in Libya, Libyan dissidents from the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group lived in close proximity to Abedi’s residence. Among the dissidents was Abd al-Baset Azzouz who ran a resistance movement in Libya under the command of Ayman al-Zawahiri and was an expert in bomb making. Dr. Syndey Alford, an explosives engineer and chairman of Alford technologies, concluded that the training Abedi is assumed to have received could have allowed him to build the homemade bomb in as little as four days. Shortly following the attack, the following excerpt appeared in the Islamic States propaganda magazine *Rumiyah*.

“On the 27th of Sha’ban, one of the soldiers of the Khilafah detonated an explosive device in the midst of a gathering of Crusaders in the British city of Manchester at a shameless

¹⁷ Evans et al., “Everything We Know about Manchester Suicide Bomber Salman Abedi.”

¹⁸ Dearden, Lizzie. “Manchester Attacker ‘Made Bomb in Four Days.’” The Independent, June 3, 2017. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/manchester-attack-bombing-salman-abedi-isis-libya-terror-training-militants-tatp-four-days-bomb-a7771391.html>.

concert at Manchester Arena, killing approximately 30 Crusaders and wounding 70 others.”¹⁹

Salman Abedi’s attack on the Manchester Arena is representative of the other major type of phenomena discussed in this project: attacks carried out and supported by an organization or its representatives. In addition, many of the red flags that characterized Abedi as well as the tactics of the attack are more distinct to attacks carried out by organizations like the Islamic State.

Looking Forward

Both Artan and Abedi’s attacks fall under the label of terrorism. However, the error in applying such a label is that it is too general to come up with an effective counter-strategy due to the vastly different nature of the attacks. In terms of perpetrators, Artan was vetted by the U.S. State Department, had a good disposition, and seemed to be on the way to advance his own station within the United States. He had no known contact with any representatives of terrorist organizations and was by and large radicalized on his own despite attending an inclusive college campus. Abedi, on the other hand, was the child of refugees who returned to their home country of Libya to assist in the civil war. He participated in violence with his father, exhibited signs of irrational behavior and hate, and was known to be in the company of jihadists, dissidents, and representatives of the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda. In terms of their tactics, Artan had very little. The methods of his attack, although not uncommon in recent terror attacks, showed little planning or long term end-goal. He prophesied no coherent ideology and seemed to act

¹⁹ “Military and Covert Operations.” *Rumiyah*, 2017, Issue 10 (34).

impulsively. Abedi, however, received meticulous training and devoted much time and energy to the execution of his plan. In addition, the advanced nature of using a bomb instead of a vehicle increased the likelihood of casualties, especially since he had to be the one to ignite it.

Although Abedi's attack was clearly more devastating than Artan's, a trend that will become clearer as this project develops differences between organized and lone wolf attacks, Abedi's attack was far more preventable relative to Artan's. The "out-of-the-blue" nature of Artan's attack provides it with a potential lethality that Abedi's lacked. In addition, Artan's attack breaks the mold of conventional terrorism as his lack of defined goal and ramblings make his attack more criminal in nature than a form of warfare. It is these discrepancies in these attacks that this project will develop and showcase an accurate threat assessment. In doing so, one type of attack will be determined as the greater threat to the regions of the United States and Western Europe in order for effective research and discussion on policy solutions to occur.

Introduction

In 2004, an online publication titled *The Call of Global Islamic Resistance* began circulating on the internet in .PDF files in the Middle East and in the more radical sects of the Islamic world. The book, a massive 1,604-page treatise, was written by a revolutionary jihadist named Abu Musab al-Suri who had begun his writing as far back as 1990. Al-Suri's thesis is centered around the gap that had formed between the reality of the Muslim community and his vision of a restored Islamic hegemony and his strategy for achieving such an aim.²⁰ There are a few basic assumptions al-Suri makes that allow him to draw the conclusion of violent jihad such as a New World Order established by a Crusader-Zionist alliance in the post-Gulf War era and that current Muslim political organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood, rulers like Sadaam Hussein, and armed organizations like the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) had either acquiesced to this New World Order or would inevitably fail given their current strategy.²¹ With these assumptions established, al-Suri spends the rest of his time developing a new strategy that shifted the battlefield to one of both open-fronts and ideas.

Al-Suri's *Call to Global Islamic Resistance* details three main schools of strategy: movement, open-fronts, and individual jihad. Rather than structure his resistance movement as a pyramid, characteristic of standard hierarchical organizations, al-Suri organized his movement in the shape of concentric circles branching out from a small central circle dedicated to orchestrating the movement to the largest circle made up of independent cells with no connection to the organization. Al-Suri states, "In this way each participant in resistance operations may be

²⁰ Ryan, Michael. *Decoding Al Qaeda's Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. Columbia University Press, 2016. (212)

²¹ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda's Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. (206-7)

traced to one thing called ‘the global Islamic resistance’ where the actions of the whole maximizes the benefit of individual operations. Moreover, the arrest of individuals does not result in the arrest of all because there is no connection among them”.²² This model theoretically guarantees a fail-safe that the defeat of one arm of the movement, either in open battle or the takedown of key leaders, does not hinder the overall resistance carried out by individuals around the world. In addition, since al-Suri’s model of resistance is supposed to encompass the global Muslim community, attacks on countries around the world are predicated on the reliance on the outermost circle; the leaderless jihad that could repeatedly strike and exhaust the Crusader-Zionist alliance at home.²³ While his strategic theory did not manifest itself exactly, al-Suri’s model for a global Islamic resistance would heavily influence Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in their endeavors to reestablish Islamic hegemony by attacking the Western world.

While much of the fighting al-Suri describes in his book is centered on open-front battles in the Middle East, the role Western countries play in ‘oppressing’ the Muslim world is not lost on the leaders of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. The U.S. citizen turned Al-Qaeda spokesman Anwar al-Awlaki states, “There is no rolling back of the worldwide jihadi movement... America as a whole has turned into a nation of evil... We will fight back and incite others to do the same”.²⁴ In a letter addressed to the American people seized in the May 1st raid on Bin Laden’s compound, Bin Laden writes, “Our jihad against you [the American people] is worship... Justice is the strongest army and security is the best way of life, but it slipped out of your grasp the day

²² Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. (210)

²³ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. (211)

²⁴ Awlaki, Anwar. “Message to the American People and Muslims in the West.” *Inspire*, 2010.

you made the Jews victorious in occupying our lands”.²⁵ Finally, Islamic State Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi stated, “Islam was never a religion of peace. Islam is the religion of fighting. No-one should believe that the war that we are waging is the war of the Islamic State. It is the war of all Muslims, but the Islamic State is spearheading it. It is the war of Muslims against infidels.”²⁶ For the leaders and scholars of Salafist motivated jihad, attacking the West is not only justified, but a moral duty.

This project will take an in-depth look at the attacks of Salafist jihad organizations against the United States and Western Europe: namely attacks planned and committed by the organizations themselves and attacks committed by so-called “lone wolves.” The goal is to ultimately conclude an accurate threat assessment of each type of attack within the United States and Western Europe and which type poses more of a threat to each respective region. Before delving further into this topic, a few parameters for the research must be established. First, this project only gathered data on Salafist groups whose ideology and motivation for jihad falls under the auspices of the aforementioned *Call to Global Islamic Jihad*. Therefore, nationalist groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Taliban, were not considered part of the data set. Second, this project only looked at attacks committed within the United States and Western Europe in the post 9/11 era, although some trends that are cited include attacks prior to 9/11/2001. Third, “Lone wolf” is a popular, yet confusing term. For this project, homegrown terrorist will be used instead of “lone wolf” and will describe individuals radicalized on the internet or through some other medium and act by themselves or small groups. They cannot have any official support or

²⁵ Francis, David. “Here’s Osama Bin Laden’s Letter to the American People – Foreign Policy.” Accessed March 19, 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/20/heres-osama-bin-ladens-letter-to-the-american-people/>.

²⁶ “IS Releases ‘Al-Baghdadi Message,’” May 14, 2015, sec. Middle East. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-32744070>.

representation from a jihadi organization *prior* to the attack (*prior* is emphasized due to organizations' tendencies to claim attackers after the fact for media noise when in reality they had no affiliation). Lastly, while certain political policies will be cited, this project will not take any political stance or give policy prescriptions from the resulting conclusions made.

Chapter 1

Olivier Roy states that Salafism “was originally meant to answer the challenge of the West. But “Salafi” no longer refers to a global political project to reform and modernize Muslim societies. The idea is to ignore the West.”²⁷ As was previously stated, this project analyses Salafist-inspired violence and the type of threats it poses to the United States and Western Europe. Since the 9/11 attacks in New York City, Salafist violence has come to the U.S. and Western Europe in the form of organized or sponsored attacks and individuals radicalized through organizational propaganda. The two largest, and most infamous, perpetrators of these attacks in the post-9/11 era have been Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. In order to properly analyze the type of threat that impacts the U.S. and Western Europe, a proper understanding of the history, capabilities, limitations, attack history, and propaganda of these organizations must be gained.

History, Composition, and Strength

Al-Qaeda

Ayman al-Zawahiri was a man who lived his life into two spheres: medicine and jihad. Although his medical career economically sustained him, the Egyptian had studied and participated in the concept of violent jihad for most of his adult life.²⁸ Zawahiri dedicated himself to the cause of overthrowing the Egyptian government based on the writings of Salafist theorist

²⁷ Leiken, Robert S. *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 1st ed. Oxford University Press, 2011. 65

²⁸ Ryan, Michael. *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. Columbia University Press, 2016. 54

Sayyid Qutb, who argued that true patriotism and allegiance is to an Islamic authority, which justifies violent overthrow of a secular regime.²⁹ Framed and imprisoned by the Egyptian government for the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Zawahiri was released in 1985 and worked his way to Pakistan to assist in the resistance against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan during the Afghan war. It is here where he came across a young, militant, and wealthy Saudi man named Osama Bin Laden.³⁰

Osama Bin Laden founded the original Al-Qaeda in 1988, which consisted of only 30 original members coming out of the Afghan war with the Soviet Union. Bin Laden saw Al-Qaeda as a way to continue the fight of the Afghan war (symbolically against imperialist and anti-Islamic forces) in the global arena.³¹ Zawahiri and Bin Laden soon formed a close bond over their shared goals and desire to forego worldly desires and wealth in favor of a more idealistically driven life. Both men decided to go their own ways to pursue the common goal of “global jihad.”

Osama Bin Laden traveled back to his home country of Saudi Arabia in 1990 and urged the Saudi government to allow him to lead a jihad against Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. He was infuriated when Saudi Arabia decided to invite a coalition of Western states led by the United States into Muslim holy land to do this work instead. Bin Laden fled to Sudan in 1992, but was not able to stay long as complaints of his terrorist activities caused the Saudi government to revoke his citizenship in 1994. Bin Laden then fled to Pakistan and in 1996 declared a global jihad against the United States and the “Judeo-Crusader Alliance.” Zawahiri was also having trouble in his own jihad. Having been expelled from Sudan and having little luck in Central Asia,

²⁹ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 36

³⁰ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 54

³¹ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 52

Zawahiri traveled back to Pakistan and the two men reunited once again to coalesce their efforts into the “World Islamic Front Against the Jews and Crusaders” or the modern-day Al-Qaeda.

Bin Laden held an immense amount of respect for Zawahiri and heeded his advice for how to steer the helm of the organization. Zawahiri, in turn, acted as Bin Laden’s physician and ceded command of the organization to him. However, it should be noted that neither man held any sort of degree in Islamic theology; they were amateurs. Rather, their authority seen by those Muslims who actively and tacitly supported the organization was seen more in their symbolic resistance to anti-Islamic doctrine perpetrated by Western and Middle Eastern governments.³² Al-Qaeda’s attack on the USS Cole in 2000 and New York City in 2001 indicated that they expected the fight against the United States would occur in a similar fashion to that of the Soviet Union. However, The U.S. success at forging allies in the Middle East and toppling the Taliban government in Afghanistan (a safe haven for Al-Qaeda) shortly after the 9/11 attacks, forced Al-Qaeda to adjust their doctrine.³³

This change in doctrine was seen best in Zawahiri’s publication *Knights Under the Prophet’s Banner*, which he wrote in 2001. One of the major strategic implications for Al-Qaeda was seen in how Zawahiri detailed the future of the jihadist movement in the following excerpt.

The answer is simple: all movements witness a process of erosion and renewal but the general outcome is what determines the fate of the movement [whether] gradual disappearance or growth – and the Jihadist movement is growing and flourishing (by the grace of Allah).³⁴

³² Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 54-55

³³ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 57

³⁴ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 64

This statement essentially acts an argument against doubters of what Al-Qaeda is trying to do and achieve. It is a sort of internal reflection that Zawahiri has of his own mortality that acknowledges that this fight against the “Zionist-Crusader Alliance” may not unravel the same way as the resistance against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan did a little more than a decade earlier. Bin Laden may be killed in the process, Zawahiri may also be killed in process, and Al-Qaeda as an organization might be defeated, but the spirit of jihad and the movement of resistance is something that ebbs and flows and cannot be stopped.³⁵

However, Zawahiri and Bin Laden were not so foolish to die this early on in their movement. They decided to separate the Al-Qaeda leadership, termed Al-Qaeda Central or AQC, from the operational Al-Qaeda cells scattered throughout the world. This is clearly reminiscent of al-Suri’s *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. While the organization is still hierarchical, the less connection between each level helps secure the survivability of the organization if one part should be compromised. A number of tactical recommendations started to emerge from AQC to operational cells in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria, Somalia, and Nigeria.

Striving to cause the largest losses on the opponent and inflict the greatest number of casualties – no matter how much the preparation for these kinds of operations costs in terms of effort and time – because this is the language the West understands...

Concentrating on suicide [martyrdom] operations because they are the most successful method of inflicting damage on the opponent with the fewest losses to the mujahedeen.³⁶

³⁵ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 64

³⁶ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 81

Such tactics are clear departures from the U.S. sponsored open warfare conducted against the Soviet Union. In addition, it allows a level of autonomous decision making by each operational Al-Qaeda cell to choose targets and methods of attack given their individual capabilities and limitations while keeping the senior leadership separate from operational risk. Despite successful strikes throughout Europe and some Middle Eastern states in the mid-2000s – mid-2010s. Al-Qaeda was never fully able to recover from the U.S. response to 9/11. The invasion and pacification of Iraq, constant U.S. presence in Afghanistan, the assassination of Osama Bin Laden (Al-Qaeda’s orator and symbolic leader), and the break and eventual overshadowing by the Islamic State have kept Al-Qaeda from duplicating the scale of the 9/11 attacks and achieve further strategic progress of removing the West from the Middle East.³⁷

However, it should be noted that despite such setbacks, Al-Qaeda as of 2019 has not disappeared. According to the *New York Times*, Al-Qaeda affiliated cells still exist in more than two dozen countries and were involved in ricin plots in both France and Germany in 2018 that were interdicted by authorities before coming to fruition.³⁸ In addition, the most recent *National Defense Strategy* published by the Trump administration stated that Al-Qaeda “remains resilient and poses an enduring threat to the homeland and United States interests around the world.”³⁹

³⁷ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*. 256

³⁸ Schmitt, Eric. “ISIS May Be Waning, but Global Threats of Terrorism Continue to Spread.” *The New York Times*, July 8, 2018, sec. World.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/06/world/middleeast/isis-global-terrorism.html>.

³⁹ Landler, Mark, and Eric Schmitt. “Terrorist Threat ‘More Fluid and Complex Than Ever,’ White House Says.” *The New York Times*, October 5, 2018, sec. U.S.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/04/us/politics/trump-counterterrorism-strategy.html>.

The Islamic State

In 2004, a 113-page article titled *Idarat al Tawahhush* or *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Ummah will Pass* found an audience with one of Iraq's most dangerous criminals, Abu Musad al-Zarqawi. This text detailed tactics for success in the modern jihadi struggle such as disruption and exhaustion through terror tactics, highly visible violence to send a message to both allies and enemies, and empowerment by conquering land as a unifier of forces.⁴⁰ Zarqawi became the leader of what was known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq or AQI and began to implement such tactics against both coalition forces and indiscriminate Muslim civilians. His tactics, however, put Zarqawi at odds with the Al-Qaeda's senior leadership who considered his tactics more detrimental to their cause than helpful.⁴¹ Zarqawi was killed in an airstrike in 2006 and AQI slowly disbanded and morphed into a new organization known as the Islamic State in Iraq or ISI, still experiencing setback after setback as the U.S. troop surge of 2007-2008 and Sunni Awakening stabilized the country. However, in 2010, a new man named Ibrahim Awwad Ali al-Badri al-Samarrai who used the nom de guerre Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi ascended to the leadership of ISI.⁴²

According to J.M. Berger and Jessica Stern, Baghdadi was born in 1971 to a Sunni-Arab family in the city of Samarra and his family was believed to be directly descended from the Prophet Muhammad.⁴³ He studied at the Islamic University in Baghdad and received a doctorate in Islamic Culture and Sharia Law. Described as "quiet" and "conservative" by his peers, Baghdadi took up the struggle of jihad when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. He was

⁴⁰ Berger, J.M., and Jessica Stern. *ISIS: The State of Terror*. Ecco, 2016. 23

⁴¹ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 22

⁴² Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 33

⁴³ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 33

captured by the U.S. in 2004 and released in 2007. He then began recruiting former Ba'athists, who were unemployed as a result of de-Ba'athification.⁴⁴ The Arab Spring in 2011 provided ISI the perfect opportunity to capitalize on the sectarian tensions and porous border between Iraq and Syria. Still under the leadership of Al-Qaeda Central, Baghdadi sent operatives into Syria to seize on the instability there which then turned into the group known as Jabhat al-Nusra. On April 9, 2013, Baghdadi announced a merger between Al-Nusra and ISI, creating the Islamic State (IS), which troubled both the leadership of Al-Qaeda and Al-Nusra. What was supposed to be an alliance turned into a war between the IS and Al-Nusra, with IS being much more effective at conquering and holding territory. On February 2nd 2014, Al-Qaeda officially broke with and denounced IS.⁴⁵ IS was now on its own and gaining serious momentum as it steamrolled across the deserts of Iraq and Syria, eventually capitalizing on the insurrection and poor training of the Iraqi military units stationed in Mosul, a city of 1.5 million people. In early June 2014, IS captured the city and Baghdadi emerged on the pulpit of the Mosul mosque to declare a new caliphate and encourage all Muslims to participate in this new utopia.⁴⁶

The Islamic State operated on a loosely based hierarchical model that relied on a series of provincial governors and feedback loops from citizens without democratic processes. This was advantageous to IS in two ways. The first is that the provincial system of administration allowed a level of autonomy to carry out operations unique to each area and that the organization as a whole could survive a leadership decapitation of Baghdadi.⁴⁷ The second is that the feedback loops allows administrators to poll constituents and make calls on what needs to be changed and

⁴⁴ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 35

⁴⁵ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 43

⁴⁶ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 47

⁴⁷ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 51

what can be ignored without sacrificing hierarchical power. Such operational autonomy and feedback allowed the Islamic State to use so called “smart mobs” to help recruit from the West. These mobs were supporters and “jihad hobbyists” who cheered the success of IS and tried to recruit outsiders to its message on the internet and social media platforms with little direction from IS senior leadership or actual risk to themselves due to internet anonymity. As long as they adhered and propagated the ideology, these online mobs could translate IS propaganda into Western languages, make calls for violence, and create twitter bots to amplify their media’s reach.⁴⁸ As of January 2015, a peak in IS’s forces, foreign fighters were estimated to be numbered at 20,700 (about 40% of the organization’s total strength) with over 4000 coming from Western European countries.⁴⁹

As the Islamic State’s expansion began to slow and eventually be rolled back, the nature of their operations changed. In late 2014, IS’s social media presence began to falter with 42% of all IS affiliated Twitter accounts being taken offline.⁵⁰ In addition, the international infamy IS gained caused a fear of spy infiltration into the organization. Entry into the proto-state began to slow as it soon became a requirement for immigrants to have some form of inside contact to vouch for their entry and all laptops, cell phones, and passports were seized upon entry.⁵¹ The nature of IS’s propaganda began to change as well from calls for immigration and celebration of military victories in their online publication *Dabiq* to a more global identity approach and call for terror attacks in home countries in *Dabiq*’s successor *Rumiyah*.⁵²

⁴⁸ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 73

⁴⁹ Neumann, Peter. *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. I.B. Tauris, 2016. 87

⁵⁰ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 171

⁵¹ Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. 100

⁵² Ingram, Haroro J. *Islamic State's English-Language Magazines*, 23.

J.M. Berger states, “The 2014 surge in the number of jihadist foreign fighters and inspired lone-wolf attacks was attributable, at least in part, to a revolution in the style and content of messaging that ISIS had deliberately pursued”.⁵³ However, despite successful attacks in Western countries, the Islamic State sold itself too well and overplayed its hand in its military operations. Many foreign fighters, especially from Western Europe, came with little to no experience in military tactics, weapons handling, local language skills, or regional geographic knowledge. Yet, according to West Point’s Combating Terrorism Center, over 89% of those who immigrated from 2011-2014 desired to be *conventional fighters* (the exact people who would need such skills).⁵⁴ Instead, many found themselves used as cannon fodder or suicide bombers in military operations with extremely high casualty rates such as the Battle of Kobane, which saw over 200 foreign fighters killed for zero strategic value.⁵⁵ In addition to this unsustainable military strategy, the intervention of foreign governments, mainly the United States and Russia in support of Iraqi and Syrian forces respectively (but not together), saw IS territory began to slowly be rolled back. On July 10, 2017, Mosul was retaken by Iraqi forces and on October 17, 2017, IS’s capital Raqqa fell to Syrian forces. Iraq was declared completely free of IS control on December 9th, 2017 and on December 19th, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump declared that the Islamic State had been defeated and he was preparing to withdraw American forces from Syria despite small insurgent pockets remaining in some cities.⁵⁶

⁵³ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 99

⁵⁴ Dodwell, Brian, Daniel Milton, and Don Rassler. “Then and Now: Comparing the Flow of Foreign Fighters to AQI and the Islamic State.” Combating Terrorism Center, 2016. 24

⁵⁵ Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. 104

⁵⁶ Library, C. N. N. “ISIS Fast Facts.” CNN. Accessed March 20, 2019.

<https://www.cnn.com/2014/08/08/world/isis-fast-facts/index.html>.

Organized Attack Statistics

The following data is derived from the Global Terrorism Database published by the University of Maryland. The following criteria was used in the data collection. All of the attacks took place between 2001 (including the 9/11 attacks) up through 2017 and included all countries in North America and Western Europe with casualty figures including both wounded and killed. *Figure 3* showcases all of the following criteria in from which the data set was collected.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ “GTD Search Results.”

Figure 3

Perpetrator Group

Al-Qaida	remove
Al-Qaida in Iraq	remove
Al-Qaida in Lebanon	remove
Al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia	remove
Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	remove
Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	remove
Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent	remove
Al-Qaida in Yemen	remove
Al-Qaida Kurdish Battalions (AQKB)	remove
Al-Qaida Network for Southwestern Khulna Division	remove
Al-Qaida Organization for Jihad in Sweden	remove
Islamic State in Bangladesh	remove
Islamic State in Egypt	remove
Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)	remove
Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)	remove
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	remove

Weapon Type

- ☒ Biological
- ☒ Chemical
- ☒ Explosives/Bombs/Dynamite
- ☒ Fake Weapons
- ☒ Firearms
- ☒ Incendiary
- ☒ Melee
- ☒ Nuclear
- ☒ Other
- ☒ Radiological
- ☒ Sabotage Equipment
- ☒ Unknown
- ☒ Vehicle (not to include vehicle-borne explosives, i.e., car or truck bombs)

Attack Type

- ☒ Armed Assault
- ☒ Assassination
- ☒ Bombing/Explosion
- ☒ Facility/Infrastructure Attack
- ☒ Hijacking
- ☒ Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)
- ☒ Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
- ☒ Unarmed Assault
- ☒ Unknown

SUICIDE ATTACKS

- ☒ Suicide Attack
- ☒ Non-suicide Attack

Target Type

- ☒ Abortion Related
- ☒ Airports and Aircraft
- ☒ Business
- ☒ Educational Institution
- ☒ Food or Water Supply
- ☒ Government (Diplomatic)
- ☒ Government (General)
- ☒ Journalists & Media
- ☒ Maritime
- ☒ Military
- ☒ NGO
- ☒ Other
- ☒ Police
- ☒ Private Citizens & Property
- ☒ Religious Figures/Institutions
- ☒ Telecommunication
- ☒ Terrorists/Non-state Militia
- ☒ Tourists
- ☒ Transportation
- ☒ Unknown
- ☒ Utilities
- ☒ Violent Political Party

Attack Criteria

Criterion I: The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal. Would you like your search results to require Criterion I to be met?

- ☒ Yes. Require Criterion I be met.

Criterion II: There must be evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) than the immediate victims. Would you like your search results to require Criterion II to be met?

- ☒ Yes. Require Criterion II be met.

Criterion III: The action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities, i.e. the act must be outside the parameters permitted by international humanitarian law (particularly the admonition against deliberately targeting civilians or non-combatants). Would you like your search results to require Criterion III be met?

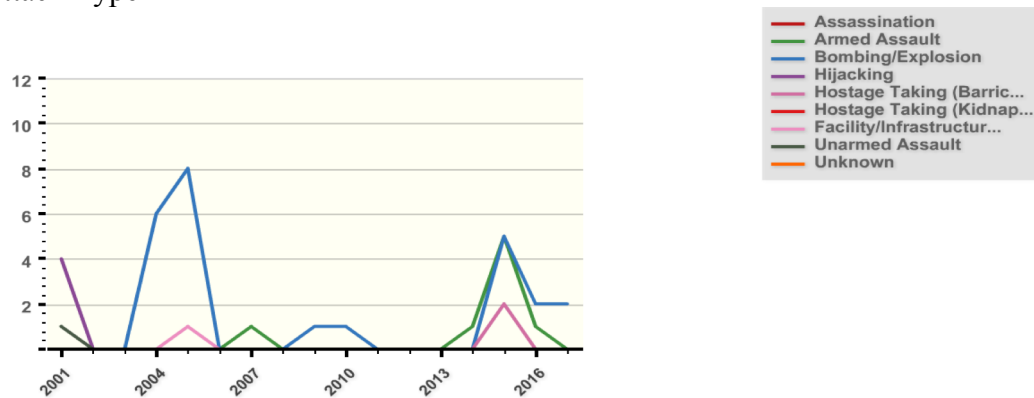
- ☒ Yes. Require Criterion III be met.

The Global Terrorism Database analysis resulted in 39 organized attacks from the preceding data. It is important to note that some attacks that are often regarded as a single incident due to their date were divided by each “strike” that occurred within the date. For instance, the 9/11 attacks were divided into 3 separate attacks for each World Trade Center tower and the Pentagon. That being said, 24 of the attacks were committed by Al-Qaeda or their regional affiliates and the other 15 were committed by the Islamic State and their affiliates. The first major Islamic State attack occurred in Brussels, Belgium on May 24, 2014. There was only one Al-Qaeda attack after that which was the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris on January 7th, 2015.

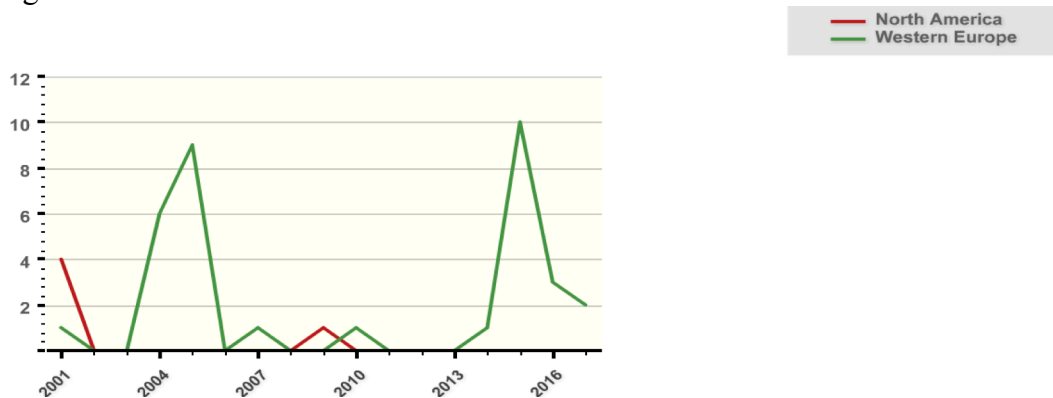
Figure 4⁵⁸ showcases line graphs of attacks over time by attack type and region.

Figure 4

Attack Type



Region



⁵⁸ “GTD Search Results.”

The majority of attacks occurred in Europe which, along with various other factors and European state government policies, will be discussed in Chapter 2. In addition, outside of the 9/11 attacks, an anomaly that will be discussed in Chapter 3, more casualties occurred in Europe as a result of the greater frequency of organized attacks. Finally, it is important to note that the attacks in the Global Terrorism Database analysis fell under the aforementioned definition of organized attacks. Homegrown terrorist attacks were not represented due to the ambiguous nature of the attacks in terms of whether or not the individual was acting under the direction or education of an organization. In addition, homegrown terrorist attacks often lack a coherent strategy or political end-goal, making them not much more than standard crime. Homegrown terrorists, however, are not to be ignored. The following section is going to explore the type of information presented to individuals who are vulnerable to be convinced to commit homegrown style attacks in the West.

Western Violence in Propaganda

As J.M. Berger states in his book, *ISIS: The State of Terror*, the Islamic State was a “daring experiment in the power of horror, but also in the marketing of a utopia.”⁵⁹ Brutal acts such as the beheading of American journalist James Foley or the burning of the Jordanian pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh were captured on camera in gruesome detail and circulated on social media sites and the Islamic State’s online magazine *Dabiq*. Given that Westerners are used to a less violent world, the display of such acts is no accident. *Dabiq* (and the Islamic State’s later publication *Rumiyah*) intentionally displayed such acts to cause horror and revile amongst

⁵⁹ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 7

Western readers.⁶⁰ It existed as a way to brag and display their capabilities, while also striking fear into such readers.

In addition to displaying acts of brutality, both the Islamic State's *Dabiq* and Al-Qaeda's *Inspire* contained specific calls for violence against the West. One of the ways both publications accomplished this was through the celebration of martyrs who committed terror attacks in Western countries whether they be lone wolf or organized terror attacks.



Figure 5: *Dabiq* Issue 10 and *Inspire* Issue 13

Figure 5 shows pages from *Dabiq* and *Inspire*^{61,62}. In the

Dabiq article, the images of many men who committed terror attacks are seen, such as the security photo of axe-wielding Zale Thompson who was radicalized on the internet to attack NYPD officers in Queens.⁶³ The image in *Inspire* shows Boston Marathon bomber Tamerlon Tsarnaev. Both images from each issue are also filled with words such as “heroes” and “knights” and demonize the West as “crusaders” (a label that will be discussed later). The glorification of

⁶⁰ Berger and Stern, *ISIS: The State of Terror*. 7

⁶¹ “Join the Caravan of Islamic State Knights.” *Dabiq*, n.d. Issue 10 (5)

⁶² “Farewell O Hero!” *Inspire*, n.d. Issue 13 (51)

⁶³ Algar, Selim, Shawn Cohen, and Larry Celona. “Pro-ISIS Muslim Convert in NYPD Ax Attack Called for Jihad.” *New York Post* (blog), October 24, 2014.

<https://nypost.com/2014/10/24/man-who-struck-cop-with-ax-supported-isis/>.

such individuals, often with endearing photographs, supports the idea that attacking the West in their home countries is just as honorable as immigrating to fight in the Middle East.

Robert VandenBerg, on behalf of The Ohio State University's Sociology department, conducted an academic endeavor titled the *Project on Radicalism in Social Media*. His research, which I participated in as a research assistant, analyzed Al-Qaeda's publication *Inspire* and the Islamic State's publications *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* and codified every single page within each publication into a data set in order to find out how these organizations justify their violence on religious, legalistic, moralistic, and various other grounds that resulted in 1486 entries. However, it is important to note that some of the articles were entered multiple times by multiple researchers in order to gain a consistent picture of the articles. The following information about the publications of *Inspire*, *Dabiq*, and *Rumiyah* is derived from this data set. Ultimately, the data set was used to find various themes that would possibly inspire and push an individual to commit violence against Western countries. Since much of the material coded dealt with topics surrounded local (Middle Eastern) conflict, not every aspect of the data set was used.

One of the major themes analyzed in the publications was whether or not an article mentioned or dealt with the theme of the conquering of Western Europe and North America. This is extremely pertinent to this research because this is one of the most overt themes pertaining to Islamic violence in the West. Out of 1486 entries into the dataset, only 86 entries touched the theme or mentioned conquering the West. Of those 86 entries, 39 were from *Dabiq* and 47 were from *Inspire*.⁶⁴ One of the



Figure 6

⁶⁴ VandenBerg, Robert. "SU18 Combined Data Set," November 26, 2018.

more striking examples of this theme is a simple image of former U.S. President Barack Obama looking solemn as he walks past memorials of fallen U.S. soldiers in *Figure 6*.⁶⁵

Another category in relation to this theme of conquering is that world domination. Although not unique to Western countries, the theme of world domination would obviously include the West. 137 entries were found to contain the theme or mention of world domination. Unlike the category of conquering the West, *Dabiq* contained more entries (84) than *Inspire* (53). This can be due to a number of reasons the first of which being the aforementioned expansionist nature of the Islamic State. Since the Islamic State was more set on expanding on anyone in their way and made little differentiation between secular Middle Eastern governments and the West. Given their objectives, it makes sense that global domination would be more prevalent in their propaganda rather than singling out Western countries. Al-Qaeda, especially under Osama Bin Laden, dealt more with the concept of the “far” enemy being the United States and other Western governments that were propping up Middle Eastern regimes. In addition to this emphasis, “conquering” in the eyes of Al-Qaeda publishers may not mean domination but rather just defeat of Western states to the point of their removal from the Middle East.⁶⁶

The term “crusader” has been used in jihadist propaganda as a way to demonize and categorize Western militaries or supporters of Western governments by using the label of the European knights that attempted to take back Jerusalem from the Islamic Empire during the Middle Ages. Within the context of the data set, “crusader” was noted as a term to dehumanize people of Western states and militaries and, in turn, justify violence against them. Out of 1436 entries, “crusader” was found in 345 entries. *Dabiq* contained a majority of the entries with 236

⁶⁵ “Do They Not Then Reflect of the Quran.” *Dabiq*, 2015 Issue 13 (30)

⁶⁶ Ryan, *Decoding Al Qaeda’s Strategy: The Deep Battle Against America*.

and Inspire contained 109 of the entries.⁶⁷ The way in which the term “crusader” is used in *Dabiq* is particularly evident of its intent to demonize and justify violence against Westerners. The following quote from the preliminary founder of the Islamic State, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, is emblazoned in the “Contents” section of *Dabiq*.

“The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify – by Allah’s permission – until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq.”⁶⁸

Immediately next to this is a depiction of defeated soldiers in Western military garb as shown in *Figure 7*.⁶⁹

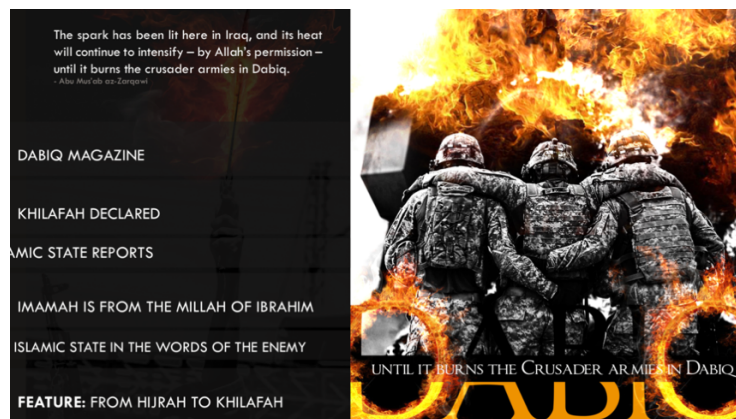


Figure 7

Further filtering of the data finds condemnations of democracy or democratic institutions, something inherently dominant in the West, as a way to justify violence. 161 entries, 82 from *Dabiq* and 79 from *Inspire*, are found to have centered around this theme as the main justification for violence.⁷⁰ Another filter used in the data set was the justification of violence according to Islamic law, adding a level of sanctification to the acts themselves. A massive 452 entries, more than one quarter of the entire data set, was found to be centered around this theme

⁶⁷ VandenBerg, Robert. “SU18 Combined Data Set,” November 26, 2018.

⁶⁸ VandenBerg, Robert. “SU18 Combined Data Set,” November 26, 2018.

⁶⁹ “Contents.” *Dabiq*, 2014 Issue 1 (2-3)

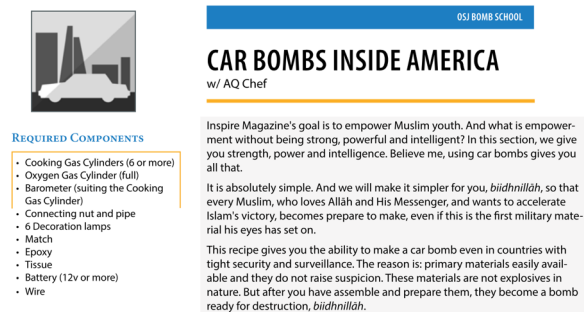
⁷⁰ VandenBerg, Robert. “SU18 Combined Data Set,” November 26, 2018.

with 216 from *Dabiq* and 236 from *Inspire*. This fairly even distribution can largely be attributed to the aforementioned fact that the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, had a Ph.D. in Islamic theology (something other jihadists like Zawahiri and Bin Laden lacked) and numerous clerics have written treatises, including the American Sheikh Anwar al-Awlaki in Al-Qaeda's *Inspire*.⁷¹

The last major category applies to violence committed in Western countries is the tactical instruction sections found in publications.

Figure 8

Only a small percentage of the publications (56 total entries) contained such information. This information is found in publications that occurred during times when both the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda were either in retreat or did not have the capabilities to mount large



scale attacks and needed to outsource their violence to homegrown terrorists. Such articles are bolstered with identity-choice appeals and basic tactics.⁷² The overwhelming majority of the tactical instructions were in Al-Qaeda's *Inspire* with 45 out of the 59 entries coming from publications. *Inspire* titled most of these sections as "Open-Source Jihad" that contained information how to make homemade bombs out of materials one can get from a hardware store or which blade is the most lethal for stabbing an individual as evidenced in Figure 8.⁷³ However, it should be noted that such information is successful only to a limited point. Like the vast

⁷¹ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* (42-43).

⁷² Ingram, Haroro J. *Islamic State's English-Language Magazines*, 23.

⁷³ "Car Bombs Inside America." *Inspire*, 2014, Issue 12 (62)

majority of individuals in stressful situations, homegrown attackers sink to the level of their training (which is very little) rather than rise to the occasion.⁷⁴

These derivations from 1436 entries from thousands of pages of Al-Qaeda and Islamic State propaganda is relevant to this research because it showcases the prevalence of the violence against Western nations in the information being presented. In addition, by using selective terms like “crusader” and dealing with themes of domination and conquering the West, the propaganda of these organization are able to paint a monolithic image of an evil civilization that which attacking is not only justified, but righteous. Overall, what is presented to potential recruits in Western countries is that of a celebration and encouragement of violence to be committed against Western countries on behalf of these organizations.

This, combined with the history of the two main terrorist organizations (Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State), shows the capabilities and limitations that each organization and type of attack (organized and lone wolf) maintains. Given that Europe experienced the majority of the attacks from the Global Terrorism Database and is geographically closer to the operating area of these organizations, Europe will be discussed first in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 will focus on the United States.

⁷⁴ Eby, Charles A. “The Nation That Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-Driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States Since 9/11,” n.d., 112. (62)

Chapter 2

As was previously stated in the attack histories of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State from 2001-2017, Western Europe was the recipient of the majority of the attacks relative to North America. One of the primary reasons behind this is simple geography. Europe's close proximity to the Middle East has resulted in a long history of conflict and trade ranging from the crusades of the early Middle Ages to the colonial exploitations of the Sykes-Picot Agreement during the early 20th Century. In a debate presented by the American Enterprise Institute, Associate Sociology Professor Dr. Edward Crenshaw asserted that the influence of Western Civilization on the Middle East has created an identity crisis in Muslims and Islamic culture, resulting in the increased appeal of fundamentalist interpretations of Islam such as Salafism.⁷⁵ Combine this with the destabilization of Middle Eastern states in the latter half of the 20th Century resulting in increased immigration and refugee populations to Europe and cultures, with a history of exploitation, in close proximity to one another can lead to conflict.

The Great Muslim Minority

The latter half of the 20th Century saw an influx of immigrants and refugees beginning to enter Western Europe. Turkish immigrants were flooded into Germany as temporary workers in low-level factory jobs who decided to stay, Muslim immigration to France from former French colonies such as Mali and Algeria began since the fall of French colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s, the United Kingdom has been a home to Pakistani immigrants since the ceded their

⁷⁵ Crenshaw, Edward, and Michael Rubin. "The Threat of Islamic Terrorism." Jennings Hall 155, November 1, 2018.

dominion over India and created the state of Pakistan (and later Bangladesh).⁷⁶ This created minority Muslim communities across Western Europe that faced racism, cultural suppression, and economic inequality. The start of the Arab Spring in 2011 and the fall of such states as Libya and civil wars in Tunisia and Syria have created a vast influx of refugees from the Middle East on top of Europe's established Muslim minority communities. By 2015, nearly 1.3 million asylum seekers, a majority of them from Muslim countries, had entered Europe.⁷⁷

As of 2016, Muslims made up a total of 4.6% of Europe's population. However, the distribution of Muslims across European states is not equal. *Figure 9* showcases a timeline of asylum seekers to Europe as well as Muslim populations as percentages of individual countries.

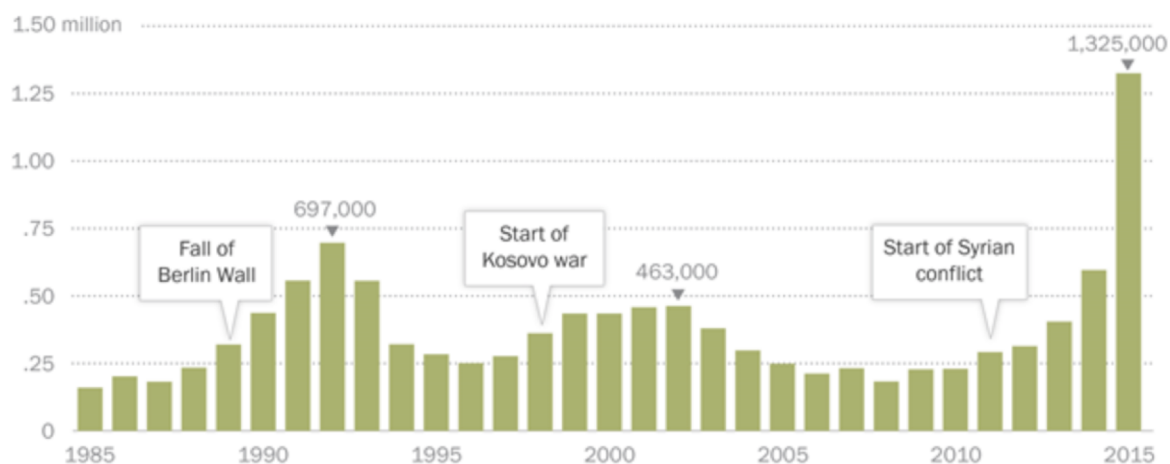
78 79

Figure 9

Asylum

Number of asylum seekers in Europe surges to record 1.3 million in 2015

Annual number of asylum applications received by EU-28 countries, Norway and Switzerland, 1985 to 2015










⁷⁶ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*.

⁷⁷ NW, Washington, and Inquiries, "Record 1.3 Million Sought Asylum in Europe in 2015."

⁷⁸ NW, Washington, and Inquiries, "Record 1.3 Million Sought Asylum in Europe in 2015."

⁷⁹ Hackett, "5 Facts about the Muslim Population in Europe."

Percentage of Populations

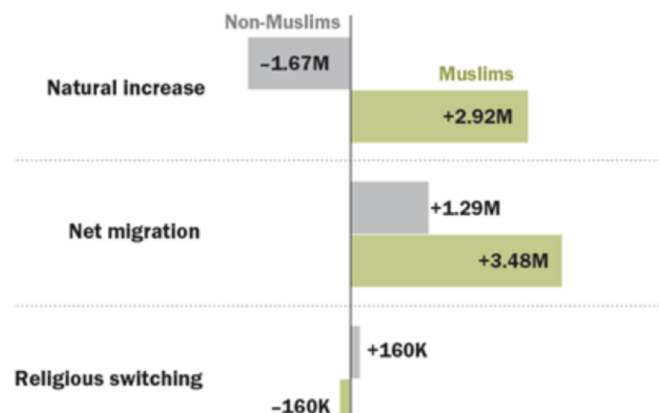
Estimated size of Muslim population in 2016			% of population that is Muslim
REGION	25,770,000		4.9%
France	5,720,000		8.8
Germany	4,950,000		6.1
United Kingdom	4,130,000		6.3
Italy	2,870,000		4.8
Netherlands	1,210,000		7.1
Spain	1,180,000		2.6

According to Pew Research, France and Germany have the largest percentages of Muslim populations in Western Europe. Europe's total Muslim population increased over a whole 1 percentage point from 2010-2016. One of the more striking differences in demographics outside of religion is that the average Muslim is 30 years old whereas the average European is 43 years old. This age disparity is largely due to the increased birth rates in Muslim communities relative to the declining birthrates in native European circles. In addition, 50% of all Muslims are under the age of 30 relative to only 32% of Europeans.⁸⁰ Figure 10 showcases the growth as a factor of both fertility and migratory patterns.⁸¹

Figure 10

Fertility and migration drove Muslim population growth in Europe between 2010 and 2016

Estimated population change between 2010 and 2016 due to three factors



⁸⁰ Hackett, "5 Facts about the Muslim Population in Europe."

⁸¹ Hackett, "5 Facts about the Muslim Population in Europe."

Within this minority of Muslims that has established itself in European countries, there remains marked differences between the 1st generation of immigrants and that of their 2nd and 3rd generation offspring. The first generation immigrant is characterized by strong ties to their country of origin and its culture. In many cases, 1st generation immigrants come for temporary work and send their money back to their homeland to their larger families. However, through a variety of factors such as economic prospering or stagnation, political policies affecting migration in and out of the country, or (as in many cases, recently) political instability in their homeland causes these 1st generation immigrants to stay. Robert Leiken notes that Muslim immigrants in Europe have a tendency to form enclaves within European cities where they can maintain their cultural identity and protect themselves from potential racism in the broader community. As a result, there is not much of an effort apart on the 1st generation immigrants to integrate.⁸² It is these close ties to their homeland that ultimately give 1st generation immigrants a sort of silver lining to their own disparity in Europe. Their children, on the other hand, do not see it the same way.

Robert Leiken states, “Euro-jihadis are often, but not always, the offspring of labor migrants who began arriving in prosperous labor-short north-west Europe in the 1950s. Their offspring were raised in hardscrabble enclaves and faced social, cultural, and economic discrimination.”⁸³ Leiken terms such offspring as “post migrants.” Post migrants are caught between two pulling civilizations, that of Europe and that of their homeland. They live in conservative homes but go to school and are educated in a liberal and secular world that seems blasphemous to the lessons taught at home. Post migrants are not fully integrated or accepted

⁸² Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 104

⁸³ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. xix

into the ethnic circles European cultural identities, but at the same time don't have the strong cultural ties to their homelands as their parents so they feel like they belong nowhere.⁸⁴ The religious interpretation that their parents follow no longer appeals to them because it does not speak to their plight.

Enter Salafism. The rigid and black and white version of Islam centered solely around conservative fundamentalist teaching of the Quran is a solution to the post migrant's crisis. It eschews both the lifestyle of the European and their parents and encourages migration to the Holy Land for proper education. The black and white, right vs wrong teachings offer clear cut answers to the post migrant's ambiguous world and offer a connection to God that needs no mediator outside the Quran itself.⁸⁵ Combine these beliefs with their aforementioned disparity as well as images of Western intervention to fight others subscribing to this fundamentalist interpretation, then the post migrant can turn from a lost and suffering youth to a violent radical with purpose, community, and a desire for revenge. The countries of France, the United Kingdom, and Germany been the targets of many post-9/11 terror attacks and have some of the largest Muslim minority populations than other European countries. The following pages will examine their experience with each of their Muslim minority communities

France

1st generation Muslim immigrants to France never intended on staying, so they never fully integrated. Their children, as a result, never learned to speak fluent Arabic and had to pick up French on the fly, which further separated them from their homeland and the world around

⁸⁴ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. xx

⁸⁵ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. xxi

them.⁸⁶ Post migrants in France are pulled by three forces: the criminal underworld, the state, or fundamentalist Islam. Each force offers its own sense of community and a way out of their current disparity. However, the only legitimate avenue (the state and labor markets) is heavily biased towards French natives. While often seen as inclusive policies, the lifestyles of lifetime employment, 35-hour work weeks, paid vacation, and healthcare are limited because an employer or the state can only afford to fill a certain number of positions. As a result, Robert Leiken states, “The result was a class system among workers... unionized workers, usually white and native, got steady jobs, even tenure, while immigrants and their offspring got short term jobs, if any.”⁸⁷ Civil unrest in the form of riots took place across France in the mid 2000s and were populated by disillusioned Muslim youth.⁸⁸ While it was later proven that militant Islamism was not a motivator and was instead the economic disparity, it is important to remember that such disparity is a contributing factor to a large component of the Muslim immigrants’ disillusionment.

Another concerning phenomena that was occurring in France around the time of the riots was a notable increase in fundamentalist Islamic practices in certain schools across the country. While not inherently bad in their own right, the practices that children began adhering to would interfere with their education and the curriculum of the schools themselves. A commission by the Inspector General of Education was sent to investigate this phenomenon. The commission found that young girls wearing veils in schools had done so “under constraint or a means of pressure on young women.” In addition, Ramadan fasting was seen to have been conducted by younger and younger students and done so with more emphasis on “personal mortification” and purity rather

⁸⁶ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 41

⁸⁷ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 37

⁸⁸ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 41

than as a symbol of identity. Subjects taught such as history with a Judeo-Christian theme, science that did not include creationism, and gym class were rejected by these children.⁸⁹ What was discovered was a cultural shift in the Islamic enclaves in France to more fundamental Salafism. Leiken notes, “The Salafist may down pizza and kebabs but he defies school rules and disparages diplomas... In the *banlieue* (Muslim enclaves), Salafism has some purchase in the second generation... in particular the unstable *quartiers*.”⁹⁰

The economic disparity and cultural infiltration of Salafism in Muslim immigrant communities gives proper cause for their disillusionment of France. As previously mentioned, Salafism encourages migration to the Holy Land of Islam as a way of education and purity for the Salafist. The collapse of countries like Syria and groups Islamic State which encourage migration to live and fight for them found a definite audience in French Muslims. Dr. Peter Neumann found that nearly 1,200 of the 4,000 European Muslims that traveled to fight in Syria as of January 2015 were French, more than any other European country. France is now faced with the problem of large numbers of disillusioned French Muslims going to receive training and fight for radical groups like the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda. The real threat is what happens to these migrants and to France itself when these migrants try to return.

United Kingdom

Like France, the Muslim minority population in the United Kingdom stems from the UK’s former colonial holdings such as Pakistan. In the United Kingdom, Muslims make up the largest immigrant cohort.⁹¹ What sets the United Kingdom apart from other European countries

⁸⁹ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 28

⁹⁰ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 53

⁹¹ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 104

is the militancy of its Muslim minority population. Leiken states, “British jihadis outnumber by an order of magnitude those of any of its continental neighbors.”⁹² This magnitude is no small sum either. The director of MI5, Jonathan Evans, stated in November 2007 that upwards of two-thousand individuals were known to be involved in terrorist activity in the United Kingdom.⁹³ In fact, the British Pakistani community has been used as a springboard by Al-Qaeda to recruit and commit attacks even in North America.⁹⁴

This begs the question of how and why such a large community that supports organized terrorism has cropped up in the United Kingdom. Like France, much disparity occurs between the Muslim immigrant population and the rest of the native citizens, which resulted in enclaves rather than societal integration. In 2003, it was found that 13% of the Muslim population was unemployed compared to only 5% of native Britons. Only 50% of Muslims were calculated to be “economically active” and there was a sharp drop in female Muslim participation in the workforce. In addition, Muslim men constituted the lowest percentage of white collar professionals and 33.7% of Muslims in the workforce were in unskilled occupations, higher than any other demographic. Lastly, 41% of Muslims over 15 had no high school diploma and 40% live in overcrowded housing situations.⁹⁵

According to Robert Leiken, there is nothing to suggest that racism or Islamophobia is the primary reason for this disparity. Instead, Leiken found that the internal culture of these Muslim immigrant enclaves had a much larger influence over their economic outcomes.⁹⁶ Anthropologist Roger Ballard found that Muslim singularity in mortuary rites and marriage rules

⁹² Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 111

⁹³ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 111

⁹⁴ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 113

⁹⁵ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 140-141

⁹⁶ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 142

“all reinforce the same tendency” that Muslim kinship networks not only inhibit the physical and social mobility of Muslim women but tend to be “tighter and focused more locally than Sikhs and Hindus.”⁹⁷

Given that economic disparity exists between Muslim immigrant enclaves and the rest of society, where does the push to the Salafist ideology come in? It began in the 1990s with the invitation of extremist preachers into the country. These preachers, such as Abu Qatada (credited with inspiring the 9/11 hijackers) and Abdullah el Faisal (tutored Richard Reid, the shoe bomber), were invited to London and subsidized by the government to create circles of security for British Muslims while the genocide of Bosnian Muslims, coalition interdiction in the Middle East, and Israeli occupations in Palestine all occurred. At the same time, calls for Islamic identity and unity emerged in the immigrant enclaves as a way to rectify secular and religious life. These calls found an especially attentive audience in Islamic student organizations at universities. Many of these students studied abroad in Saudi Arabia, picked up the Salafist ideology, and brought back with them literalist interpretations of the Quran. The genocide of Bosnian Muslims impacted the Muslim immigrant community especially hard. Images of white Europeans slaughtering Muslims caused many to look cautiously at their white British counterparts and primed them for jihadist radicalization.⁹⁸ Instead of attempting to get a grip on these minority communities by reinforcing a national identity like France did, it is evident the United Kingdom thought it best to let such communities cultivate and evolve without constraint.

Combine this radicalization with the economic disparity resulting from enclave culture and an “us vs them” or “insider vs outsider” mentality can form very easily with British

⁹⁷ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 148

⁹⁸ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 151-160

Muslims. Olivier Roy is especially keen on the “insider vs outsider” mentality in Muslim enclaves. The preachers who came and espoused radical ideas left their own families and homes to fight and preach abroad. They exist as prime examples of a Salafist ideology that views anyone who doesn’t rigidly adhere to its tenants as an outsider.⁹⁹ Robert Leiken states, “The lords of Londonistan fastened their *Outside* narrative to the *Inside* alienation of numerous British Pakistanis. When the Eastern message of the *Outside* found Western alienation on the *Inside*, the mixture proves explosive. That blast detonated on a larger scale with the reception of ISIS in 2014.”¹⁰⁰ British jihadism is still currently the largest wave in all of European jihadism.¹⁰¹

Germany

The last major enclave of the Muslim minority population in Europe is in Germany. Like the rest of Europe in the mid 20th Century, Germany brought in large numbers of immigrant laborers, many of them Turkish, to temporarily fill jobs while the country’s economy recovered from the devastation of the 2nd World War and communist occupation. As of 2012, there are between 3.8 and 4.3 million Muslims living in Germany. 66.7% of the Muslim population is Turkish and over 50% of Muslims are Sunni. The majority reside in the western half of the country and less than 33.3% have German citizenship.¹⁰² Many of the 1st generation Turkish immigrants were actually skilled laborers. However, upward mobility was once again hindered by social customs that resulted from the compartmentalization of the Turkish community. They tended to keep the company with families from their villages and only reproduce with such

¹⁰⁰ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 172

¹⁰¹ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 216

¹⁰² Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 243

individuals. Studies conducted by Federal Ministry of Family in Germany found that 90% of Turks married other Turks and less than 10% of those marriages were exogenous.¹⁰³ As a result, Turkish post migrants experienced both internal and external isolation. They were clearly different than the German ethnocentric community and when they visited their native homeland, these post migrant children were viewed as “Germaners.” They belonged nowhere.¹⁰⁴

As was the similar experience with both French and British Muslim immigrants, radical ideas began to capitalize on the economic and identity-based isolation faced by these post migrants. According to Leiken, the mid 2000s were a turning point in that the radicalization of the second generation of Turkish immigrants began to occur as a result of the influence of Al-Qaeda related groups.¹⁰⁵ Both the Islamic Information Center and the Multikultur Haus in the city of Ulm became renowned for the circulation of radical Islamic ideas. It was found that upwards of 20 attendees of these institutions went to train at Islamic Jihad Union camps, an Al-Qaeda subset, in Pakistan. Leiken notes that when the Multikultur Haus was closed by authorities in late 2005, literature was found extolling the murder of Christians and Jews.¹⁰⁶ In the summer of 2007, a group known as the Sauerland Group, which comprised of forty individuals, the majority of them ethnic Turks and some converts, were plotting attacks across Germany. The group was interdicted by German authorities before any attacks could be carried out. All of those implicated were determined to have been radicalized within Germany by the Islamic Jihad Union.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 244

¹⁰⁴ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 245

¹⁰⁵ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 238

¹⁰⁶ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 255

¹⁰⁷ Leiken, *Europe's Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 220

Robert Leiken asserts, “The post migrant Muslim extremist opts for an identity he chooses, not one he inherits. He adopts his own myth of return, to a golden age of Islamic intensity and purity... That narrative awaits him not only in the mosque or in the Islamic center but also in the university prayer room, the bookstore, the gym, and the cellblock.”¹⁰⁸ In addition, there is the issue of jihadists coming back fighting in the Middle East, as was seen in the Manchester bomber. With over 4,000 Europeans having gone to fight in the Middle East, it has been estimated that upwards of 10-15% have already been killed in the fighting.¹⁰⁹ Dr. Thomas Hegghammer looked at returning fighter data from the 1990s and the early 2000s and found that 9% continue to commit attacks in their home countries. Dr. Neumann studied the phenomena of returning fighters and classified them as disillusioned, traumatized, undecided, and dangerous. It is these last two categories that he believes pose a potential threat to Europe. He states, “The number mobilized for the present conflict [Syria] is already four times what it was for Iraq... Even if we assume 30 per cent killed or permanently ‘emigrated’ and even if Hegghammer’s relatively low conversion rate of one in nine turns out to be true, we would still end up with 300 ‘dangerous’ returnees, who are motivated, and networked and have learnt their ‘profession’ from the most brutal terror group of all time”¹¹⁰ While this number is small by any population metric, the devastation from a view motivated individuals has already been seen since 9/11 and to have hundreds of such motivated and capable individuals existing in European society should cause concern.

The aforementioned migrant crisis that has been occurring in Europe since 2011 has brought in more Muslim minority communities from Syria and across the Middle East. While

¹⁰⁸ Leiken, *Europe’s Angry Muslims: The Revolt of the Second Generation*. 266

¹⁰⁹ Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. 105

¹¹⁰ Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. 109

many attacks in recent years in Europe have occurred after much of the information presented was written, it is important to remember the experiences of these Muslim communities prior to this refugee crisis. The increased flow of Muslim migrants from the Middle East is only compounding on the problems experienced by these minority enclaves and further stressing the ability of these European states to combat the problem of radicalization in their countries.

Organized Attacks in Europe

As stated in the introduction, this project classifies organized attacks as attacks that occurred on behalf of or involvement or training from an organization, namely the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda. The Global Terrorism Database was used to gather data on the organized attacks that occurred in Western Europe from 2001-2017 committed by Al-Qaeda and their affiliates and the Islamic State and their affiliates similar to the data presented in Chapter 1.

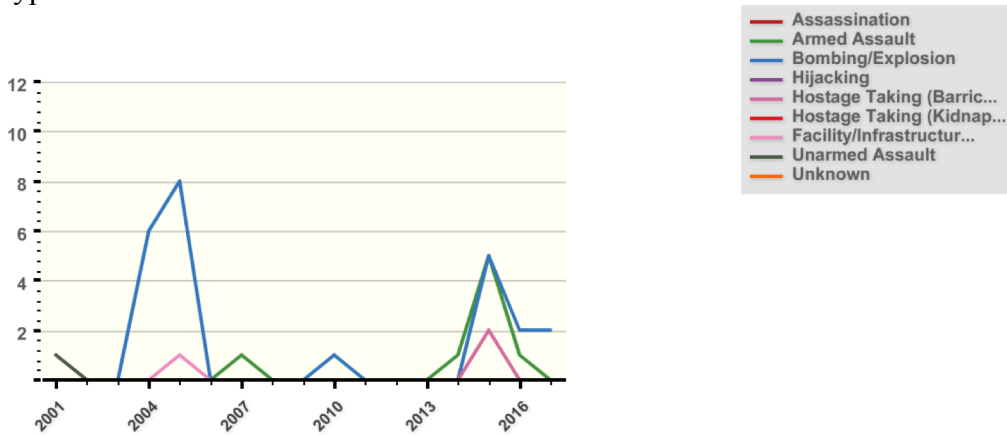
During this time frame, there have been 34 attacks in Western Europe (it is important to remember that each strike is considered its own attack). Prior to 2014, all attacks were committed by Al-Qaeda and after the Charlie Hebdo shooting in January 7, 2015, all subsequent attacks were committed by the Islamic State. Over 75% of all the attacks had some form of bombing or explosion during the incident. Armed assault took place in just over 21% of the attacks and the first attack involving armed assault did not occur until the Islamic State's attack in Brussels on May 24, 2014. The only Al-Qaeda attack that used firearms was the aforementioned Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris in 2015. Transportation was the largest target until after the July 7, 2005 bombings in London. After that point, businesses and private citizens become the largest targets of subsequent attacks. Only 29 of the 34 attacks actually had casualties resulting from them, but when attacks were successful, 8 of the 29 attacks had

casualties ranging from 11-50 and 12 attack had casualties in ranges larger than 101. This data is available in *Figure 10*. Note that not all graphs add up to exactly 34 attacks due to the overlapping nature (i.e. hostage taking and armed assault in one attack) of tactics.¹¹¹

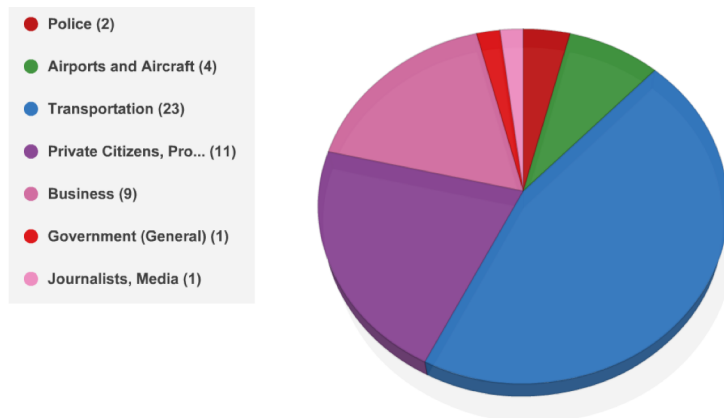
¹¹¹ “GTD Search Results.”

Figure 10

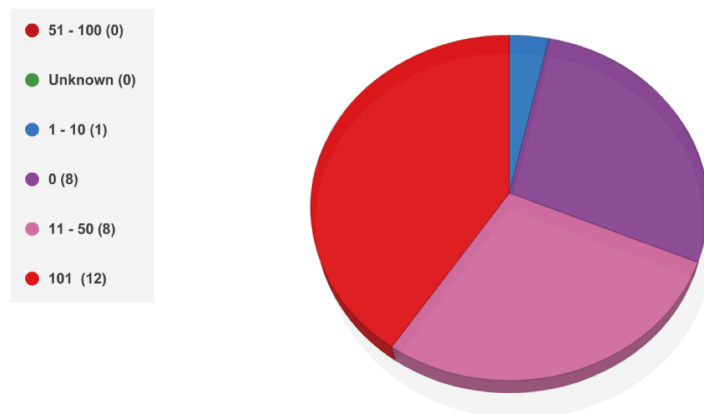
Type of Attacks Over Time



Targets of Attacks



Casualties



In addition, there are a number of characteristics of organized attacks that the Global Terrorism Database cannot provide. In terms of suicide attacks (attacks where the perpetrator's death must occur for the attack to be successful) and non-suicide attacks (includes attacks where the perpetrator wanted to live or expected to be gunned down), non suicide attacks outnumber suicide attacks. Suicide attack frequency remained largely the same from 2010-2017 with zero occurring from 2011-2014 and 2 per year occurring between 2015-2017.¹¹² but the mass casualties from attacks like the Manchester bombing may make it seem like suicide attacks are more prevalent than they actually are. Despite non-suicide attacks occurring more than suicide attacks, it was found that in the majority of cases involving non-suicide attacks, the perpetrator still intended on dying as some point or was not phased with the prospect of dying. Either way, getting away was either not the end goal or just extra luck.¹¹³

In addition, it is important to note that suicide attacks are consistent with organized attacks and rarely, if never found among lone wolf attacks. The reason behind this is largely due to organizational planning. Suicide attacks involving bombs require a certain level of training and organizational logistics to be carried out effectively. Ariel Merari studied the phenomena of suicide bombing in Palestine in his book *Driven to Death* and his findings over the demographics of suicide bombers support this notion. He had found that over 95% of suicide bombers were males and 89% were under the age of 30. 66.7% of all suicide bombers expressed distress at actually carrying out the attack and this distress and desire to abandon the mission became more

¹¹² Dongen, Teun van. "The Fate of the Perpetrator in the Jihadist Modus Operandi: Suicide Attacks and Non-Suicide Attacks in the West, 2004-2017." *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, 2017. (6) <https://doi.org/10.19165/2017.1.12>

¹¹³ van Dongen, "The Fate of the Perpetrator in the Jihadist Modus Operandi." (8)

intense as the days and hours drew closer to the moment of truth.¹¹⁴ Therefore, it is clear that a supporting organization must be present for a suicide attack to be carried out. As Dr. Jeffery Lewis notes, “They [suicide attacks] are seldom the product of an individualized choice. They are almost always the product of an organizational process designed to transform otherwise normal individuals into agents of self-destruction.”¹¹⁵ The technical expertise, training, and pressure to actually commit the attack are simply nonexistent with an organization.

Overall, 444 people have been killed and over 1,900 people have been injured as a result of organized terror attacks committed by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Despite being pushed back or routed from land holdings, both organizations still present a real, but statistically small threat to Western Europe

Homegrown Terrorists

Homegrown terror attacks are an amorphous classification. By the standards of this project, the attacks presented in the Global Terrorism Database are considered organized attacks. However, that does not mean that any attacks not mentioned falls under the category of homegrown terrorism. These such attacks must be committed by lone individuals or groups of fewer than three people and have no prior affiliation to an organized group outside of a pledge of allegiance. No such database records these attacks and attacks that were prevented by European state forces are not always broadcasted for security reasons. That being said, the threat of

¹¹⁴ Merari, Ariel. *Driven to Death: Psychological and Social Aspects of Suicide Terrorism*. 1st ed. Oxford University Press, 2010. 134

¹¹⁵ Lewis, Jeffery William. *The Business of Martyrdom: A History of Suicide Bombing*. Naval Press Institute, 2012. 5-6

homegrown attacks will be evaluated more on their *potential* lethality and rate of occurrence with a few case studies as boundaries.

On November 2, 2004, Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh was ambushed on the street by Muhammad Bouyeri, a man of Dutch and Moroccan descent, who stabbed and shot Van Gogh. Bouyeri was not a member of affiliated with any organization but rather inspired to kill Van Gogh out of revenge for his film *Submission*, a controversial documentary about marital abuse in Islamic marriages which garnered heavy condemnation and death threats from Muslims. Only one actually followed through.¹¹⁶ On July 8, 2016, 31-year-old Tunisian Mohamad Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drove a 19-ton truck through the streets of Nice, France into a crowd celebrating Bastille Day and killed 86 people and wounded another 458. Although multiple people were later arrested in conjunction with the attack and the Islamic State claimed responsibility for it, French authorities assessed that Bouhlel was inspired by their propaganda and had no affiliation.¹¹⁷ These attacks, one an assassination and one a mass casualty event, represent the capabilities of homegrown terrorists. They can be stealthy and surgical or destructive and rampaging.

It is important to quickly examine a general profile of lone wolves before detailing their threat. According to the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, homegrown terrorists exhibit three main patterns. The first is that social ineptitude or psychological disturbance is common trait among perpetrators. The second is voluntary isolation from society. This can easily be demonstrated in the rejection of familial customs seen 2nd generation Muslim immigrants. The

¹¹⁶ Simons, Marlise. "Dutch Filmmaker, an Islam Critic, Is Killed." *The New York Times*, November 3, 2004, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/03/world/europe/dutch-filmmaker-an-islam-critic-is-killed.html>.

¹¹⁷ Press, Associated. "Nice Truck Attack: French Police Arrest Eight More Suspects." *The Guardian*, September 20, 2016, sec. World news. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/20/nice-truck-attack-french-police-arrest-eight-new-suspects>.

third and final pattern is the distribution of ideas or manifestos before or after the attack such as Bouyeri leaving a note on Van Gogh's body after killing him.¹¹⁸

Homegrown terrorist capabilities, however, are not nearly as consistent as organizational capabilities for carrying out attacks. The aforementioned fact that a plurality of organized attack casualties exceeded 101 demonstrates a certain level of success that homegrown attacks have not been able to consistently replicate. However, there are a number of characteristics to the tactic of homegrown terrorism that make it a threat. The first main advantage harkens back to al-Suri's *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. If the operative on the outer level of the jihad movement that is inspired to commit attacks is compromised, it rarely affects the inner leadership or propaganda distributors. In addition, the level of independence and autonomy given to the individual in the outer level makes it difficult to prepare counter-tactics since homegrown terrorists do not follow the tactical tendencies of organizations. Thomas Hegghammer discovered that the "downside" of fighting for an organization is the level of control it holds over the individual jihadist. Deviation from the organization's ideology or tactics are rarely tolerated even when it may mean greater operational success.¹¹⁹ Without these constraints, homegrown terrorists are free to choose the methods, time, and place of attack to their liking.

Another characteristic of homegrown terrorism in Europe that makes it a threat is the larger pool of potential recruits. The European Muslim population is 14 times larger than that of the United States. In addition, Europe has also experienced 8.3 times more Islamic terror attacks

¹¹⁸ Simons, "Dutch Filmmaker, an Islam Critic, Is Killed."

¹¹⁹ Hegghammer, Thomas. "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting." *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 01 (February 2013): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000615>. 11

than the United States.¹²⁰ Now, this project is not making any claims that a larger Muslim population equals more terror attacks. However, the propaganda put forth by Al-Qaeda and more recently the Islamic State has a strong emphasis on identity-choice appeals, something which has been demonstrated to be lacking in Muslim immigrant communities in Europe. Therefore, on a statistical basis, the likelihood of someone being radicalized from the European Muslim population is larger than that of the United States due to the greater population size and x-factor of Muslims identity isolation in enclaves.

Another homegrown terrorist characteristic that represents a threat is the type of weapons used in attacks. Even through aforementioned instruction manuals appear in the propaganda of organizations, inspired readers rarely have the technical expertise to construct a bomb. Since homegrown terrorists do not have the capability or support to construct effective explosives, they have turned to simpler weapons such as firearms, knives, and vehicles. The devastation of vehicles being used as a weapon is evident in the attack on Nice, France, which has only been rivaled in casualty numbers by the most destructive bomb blast by the Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. As of 2017, 150 people have died and over 800 people have been injured in vehicular attacks.¹²¹ However, vehicular effectiveness is largely limited by the targets itself since vehicles cannot truly penetrate large structures and are really only effectively used in large crowds.

Firearm effectiveness is fairly self-evident and is not limited by the constraints physical structures. The Paris attacks in November 2015 (although organized) in which over 130 people died demonstrate this. Even strict European firearm laws are able to be circumvented by

¹²⁰ Jenkins, Brian Michael. *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies: Radicalization and Recruitment to Jihadist Terrorism in the United States since 9/11*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011. 22

¹²¹ Jenkins, Brian Michael. "Navigating the Latest Terrorism Trend," December 19, 2017. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/12/navigating-the-latest-terrorism-trend.html>. 2

dedicated homegrown terrorists. A European Commission report in April, 2018 found that military-grade rifles were able to be smuggled into Europe and sold through the internet or European criminal gangs to terrorist groups.¹²² The editor of the report, Niles Duquet, stated, “In Western Europe, the traditional closed character of criminal gun markets has partially eroded in recent years and we have observed an increased availability of military-grade firearms. These weapons have also ended up in the hand of terrorists.”¹²³ Although not as consistently devastating as bomb detonations, these tactics should not be ignored as non-threatening.

Preliminary Conclusions

The threat of Salafist jihadi terrorism to Europe is still alive and well. The alienation experienced by 2nd and 3rd generation Muslims whose families immigrated to Europe has created a large pool of disillusioned and angry young people who are vulnerable for radicalization. There have been a number of organized attacks in Europe since 2001 with Al-Qaeda dominating the scene prior to 2014 and the Islamic State taking the mantle after 2014, if only for a short while. Organized attacks have a number of capabilities including large organizational logistics, the ability to make effective explosives, and the willingness to use suicide bombers in their attacks. However, organization attacks can be predicated on the patterns and beliefs of a particular organization. This reduces their threat to an extent since law enforcement and governments can develop policies to counter tactical patterns. Homegrown attacks are harder to properly assess due to their amorphous nature, but their autonomy for tactical planning and large pool of

¹²² Burke, Jason. “Military Grade Firearms Increasingly Available to Terrorists in Europe - Report.” *The Guardian*, April 18, 2018, sec. World news.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/18/arms-race-criminal-gangs-helping-terrorists-get-weapons-report-warns>.

¹²³ Burke, “Military Grade Firearms Increasingly Available to Terrorists in Europe - Report.”

potential recruits plays to their advantage as a threat that is incredibly hard to preemptively fight. However, homegrown terrorist weapons are largely limited to simpler mechanisms such as firearms, knives, and vehicles, which lack the destructive capability of a well-put-together explosive that an organization can create.

Chapter 3

If one were to run a quantitative analysis for a number of metrics (i.e. body count, financial loss, media air-time) resulting from terrorist attacks perpetrated by Salafist organizations accounted by the Global Terrorism Database, one would find the United States exceeds that of all of Europe. However, the United States only had five incidents compared to Europe's 34 incidents occurring between 2001 and 2017. The reason for this is simple; the attacks of September 11, 2001. According to the GTD, four separate attacks occurred on this date: the attack on tower one, the attack on tower two, the attack on the Pentagon, and the crashed plane in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Over 3,000 people were killed during this incident alone and has remained ingrained in the national memory as one of the most devastating attacks against the United States ever since.¹²⁴ The 9/11 attacks make up the near entirety of the United States' statistics involving attacks from organized Salafist groups. Only one officially organized attack has occurred in the United States since 9/11 and that was the "underwear bomber" attack on December 25, 2009 when Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's bomb failed to detonate on a flight to Detroit, injuring only himself and a fellow passenger.¹²⁵ However, since 9/11 360 people have been charged with jihadi terror crimes in the United States, with some actually carrying out attacks like the aforementioned attack at The Ohio State University. Why is this the case? Why is it that amid all the targeting against the United States in organized propaganda and criticisms of U.S. interventions in the Middle East have there been so few organized attacks and so many homegrown terrorist attacks?

¹²⁴ "GTD Search Results."

¹²⁵ "GTD Search Results."

The U.S. Difference

Immigrants and Refugees

The United States is known colloquially as a “melting pot.” Immigration to the U.S. has existed throughout the nation’s entire history (primarily from European countries, but more recently from Middle Eastern, African, and Asian countries). The majority of refugees are coming from either Africa and the Middle East. In fact, the United States has more immigrants than any other country on Earth and 13.5% of the population is foreign born.¹²⁶ As a result, U.S. culture has evolved to have some degree of natural tolerance to outsiders that is only now just forming in the single-ethnically dominated states of Europe. 65% of Americans polled by Pew Research in 2017 believed that immigrants and refugees strengthened the country by adding skills and talents to the labor pool.

This attitude and appreciation is also reciprocal. Over half of all immigrants and refugees are proficient in English, demonstrating a certain level of willingness to assimilate into the United States. In addition, according to sociology professor Dr. Edward Crenshaw, the United States implements resettlement provisions for refugees so that they are dispersed throughout the interior of the country and not just consolidated on coastal cities.¹²⁷ This helps prevent the issue of large immigrant or refugee populations forming cultural enclaves like that which has been shown in France and the United Kingdom. As Peter Bergen states, “For French Muslims, in short, there is no ‘French Dream,’ nor, by extension, an ‘EU Dream’... It’s also not surprising

¹²⁶ López, Gustavo, Kristen Bialik, and Jynnah Radford. “Key Findings about U.S. Immigrants.” *Pew Research Center* (blog). Accessed February 19, 2019. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/30/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>.

¹²⁷ Crenshaw and Rubin, “The Threat of Islamic Terrorism.”

that it is the European country that had suffered to most severe ‘blowback’ from the Syrian war.”¹²⁸ In addition, due to geographic separation and bias for family-sponsored immigrants, massive waves of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa do not affect the United States like Europe.¹²⁹ This both naturally and artificially filters people who want to travel and assimilate versus those who are fleeing violence and “end up” somewhere without a true desire to assimilate. As a result, this promotes assimilation into U.S. culture and society to the point that those of foreign descent see themselves as part of the culture and society instead of outside it, or worse, against it.

Counter-Terrorism

The attacks on September 11, 2001 were not only the most devastating terror attack in the Western world, but also a tremendous piece of theater. The ability of a non-state actor such as Al-Qaeda to be able to attack the financial and defense capitals of the world’s foremost superpower by turning passenger airlines into de-facto cruise missiles *from a purely operational and tactical standpoint* is an impressive feat. However, it is a statistical outlier.¹³⁰ The likelihood that an attack of that magnitude could be perpetrated by a non-state actor against the new security measures placed by the United States and other Western countries is near zero.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Bergen, Peter. *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* Broadway Books, 2017. 14

¹²⁹ NW, 1615 L. St, Suite 800 Washington, and DC 20036 USA 202-419-4300 | Main 202-857-8562 | Fax 202-419-4372 | Media Inquiries. “Key Facts about U.S. Immigration Policies and Proposed Changes.” *Pew Research Center* (blog). Accessed March 24, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/02/26/key-facts-about-u-s-immigration-policies-and-proposed-changes/>.

¹³⁰ Jenkins, Brian. *Fifteen Years After 9/11: A Preliminary Balance Sheet: Addendum*. RAND Corporation, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.7249/CT458.1>. 4

¹³¹ Jenkins, Brian Michael. “There Will Be Battles in the Heart of Your Abode: The Threat Posed by Foreign Fighters Returning From Syria and Iraq,” n.d., 8

The United States' response to the 9/11 attacks ultimately contributes to the lack of organized and high casualty attacks. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush in 2002 combined over 22 federal agencies and departments under one umbrella to safeguard critical U.S. infrastructure and gather intelligence in conjunction with other federal departments. The Patriot Act of 2001 was a controversial bipartisan piece of legislation that aimed at increasing the cooperation of various intelligence agencies and gave law enforcement greater autonomy in tracking suspected terrorists. In addition, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorist Prevention Act of 2004 - considered one of the most substantive pieces of national security legislations since the National Security Act of 1947 – created a Director of Intelligence position that was in charge of the entire U.S. intelligence community, including military intelligence units.¹³² Lastly, the U.S. military's quick response and presence in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks deposed of the Taliban government and destroyed the safe-haven camps Al-Qaeda had been using with impunity.

Such drastic changes in national security not only stirred up controversy over the disregard for civil liberties of U.S. citizens, but also created a large wave of discontent under President Bush that the U.S. was waging a war against Islam instead of terrorists.¹³³ However, like President Bush, much of President Obama's national security policy was still focused a forward military presence, but in a different manner. Obama pulled back conventional force intervention and instead opted for "seeking out" and "disrupting" terrorists before they could attack. He increased the use of Joint Special Operations Command to take down key terrorist

¹³² michael.kaczmarek@europarl.europa.eu, eleni.lazarou@europarl.europa.eu. "US Counter-Terrorism since 9/11," n.d., (2)

¹³³ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 199

suspects abroad, such as Osama Bin Laden in 2011. With its own air force, drones, and intelligence operatives, Peter Bergen comments, “It [JSOC] was in some ways less accountable than the CIA.”¹³⁴ Conservative estimates that by the end of Obama’s second term as president, 3,000 people had been killed in drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen, countries in which the U.S. did not officially have a military presence in.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, the efforts of the United States intelligence community, military, and rest of the federal government were doing something right in the fight against organized terrorist attacks on the homeland.

While many other Western nations have increased their counter-terror capabilities by bolstering intelligence units and assisting the U.S. military abroad, the magnitude by which this effort has been undertaken in the United States must be made known as a contributing factor to the lack of organized attacks in the United States.

U.S. Muslims: Profile and Opinions

One of the last major differences between the United States and Europe that contributes to the smaller number of terror attacks is the profile of Muslims that are immigrating, assimilating, and living within the United States. As has been stated earlier, American Muslims are not as vulnerable to radicalization as their European counterparts due to many factors, a major one being their ability and willingness to assimilate and avoid establishing enclaves. U.S. Muslims tend to be wealthier than their European counterparts simply on the basis of the cost of living and cost of immigrating. Crossing the Mediterranean Sea is undoubtedly less expensive

¹³⁴ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 204

¹³⁵ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 204

than trying to cross the Atlantic Ocean. According to Pew Research, U.S. Muslims have a college or post-graduate degree at the same rate as non-Muslim U.S. adults (31%). In addition, U.S. Muslims are near as likely to report household incomes over \$100,000 at the same rate as other demographics of U.S. adults. Peter Bergen also states, “The American Dream has worked pretty well for the majority of American Muslims, who are both as wealthy and educated as the average American.”¹³⁶ Despite U.S. Muslims having a smaller likelihood of owning a house or being employed full-time relative to other adult demographics, Pew Research notes that U.S. Muslims report overall satisfaction with their finances as other adult demographics.¹³⁷

Despite these positive aspects that assist in assimilation, Muslims in the United States can still hold opinions sympathetic to Islamic terrorism or anti-U.S. foreign policy. It should be noted that the following information is not inherently good or bad, but a reflection of attitudes discovered by Pew Research from phone interviews in 2007 and 2011 and internet polls in 2016. Initially, there was a large amount of resentment towards the Bush administration following the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the so-called War on Terror. This dropped slightly with the election of Barack Obama, who promised the ending of such interventions abroad (when in reality he just changed tactics as previously mentioned). In 2011, close to half of all Muslims surveyed across country-of-origin groups saw the War on Terror as insincere. In January 2016, 47% of Muslims surveyed felt the War on Terror was a war against Islam, but this declined to just 32% by

¹³⁶ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 14

¹³⁷ NW, 1615 L. St, Suite 800 Washington, and DC 20036 USA 202-419-4300 | Main 202-419-4349 | Fax 202-419-4372 | Media Inquiries. “Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans,” July 26, 2017. <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/>.

October of that same year. Shi'a U.S. Muslims also expressed similar disapproval, even though most of the fighting was against Sunni Muslims.¹³⁸

In terms of opinions of terrorist tactics and groups, U.S. Muslims have a far lower approval rate of such topics relative to their disapproval of U.S. foreign policy. Across various origin groups, Pew found a 1-12% approval rate of Al-Qaeda by U.S. Muslims in 2007, which dropped to a 0-6% approval rate by 2011. Approval of suicide bombing was between 2-10% across origin groups in 2007 and marginally declined to 2-9% in 2011.¹³⁹ One of the most prominent conclusions from this data is that overall approval of Al-Qaeda and suicide bombing remained low and consistent (with both rates declining) across the time measured.

All of these characteristics that make up the difference between U.S. Muslims and their European counterparts help explain why the United States has suffered so few and effective organized terror attacks since 9/11/2001. All of the major components that are characteristic for organizational recruitment in Europe such as group isolation, enclaves, and governments permitting the establishment of radical imams in mosques simply do not exist on the same level in the United States. The immigrant assimilation history and culture of the United States, the counter-terrorism efforts of the U.S. government in the post 9/11 era, and the low approval rate of Al-Qaeda and hallmark jihadist tactics like suicide bombing explain why the level of organized terror in the United States is so low relative to Europe.

¹³⁸ Fajmonová, Veronika, Sophia Moskalenko, and Clark McCauley. "Tracking Radical Opinions in Polls of U.S. Muslims." *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 2 (April 25, 2017). <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/594>. 37-44

¹³⁹ NW, Washington, and Inquiries, "Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans." 40

Attacks in the United States: Data, Trends, and Challenges

Data

Since organized attacks in the United States are so low – only one having occurred in the post-9/11 era with no deaths – resulting from the aforementioned “U.S. Difference,” it necessary to get an overall summary of the attacks (both failed and successful) that have occurred on U.S. soil. Just because the GTD only reported one attack after 9/11 up through 2017 does not mean there were no attacks, deaths, or casualties resulting from Salafist jihadism in the United States. According to Peter Bergen, from 9/11 to 2016, there have been 360 people that have been charged with jihadist terror crimes in the United States.¹⁴⁰ These include everything from murder to small money transfers. Tacit support of terrorism in the form of small money transfers is one such way wealthier Muslims who live in United States can be involved. The overwhelming majority of those charged were American citizens and about half were charged with attempting to join a terrorist organization overseas. This is an important distinction to note. Due to the aforementioned factors that neuter organized terror’s effectiveness, any U.S. Muslim that wanted to be affiliated with an organization had to travel abroad to do so.¹⁴¹

According to Peter Bergen, 94 Americans have been killed by jihadists in the United States since the 9/11 attacks.¹⁴² All of these deaths resulted from attacks not recorded in the GTD data simply because the only other organized attack that occurred on U.S. soil had two casualties, but no deaths.¹⁴³ Compare this to the 444 Europeans that have been killed just from attacks

¹⁴⁰ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 10

¹⁴¹ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 10

¹⁴² Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 17

¹⁴³ “GTD Search Results.”

recorded in the GTD and one can appreciate the difference in the overall threat that Salafist terrorism poses to the United States as well as the threat (or lack thereof) from organized Salafist groups, 9/11 being withheld. In addition, it is important to keep the potential effectiveness of organized terrorism in context given both the regional and operational challenges groups such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State face. According to Brian Jenkins, the operational capabilities of both organizations 15 years after 9/11 are quite limited. These groups often only succeed due to local governmental collapse and not their military prowess, which forces them to focus on regional quarrels.¹⁴⁴ Simple geography can obviously place Europe in the regional extension of such group's operational capabilities. However, planning and carrying out an attack an ocean away presents such large logistical challenges to these organizations that the potential payoff is oftentimes not worth the effort. Despite this, Al-Qaeda is still vocal about their commitment to attack the United States.¹⁴⁵

According to Brian Jenkins, there have been 32 homegrown "plots" to commit terrorism in the United States from 2002-2010. Of these 32, only ten got to an actual operational planning stage and of those ten, six were F.B.I stings. Of those four that were not stings, only three were ever actually carried out. Three of the 32 plots involved 6 or more people and 22 involved just one individual. Only six of the plots had any sort of communication with an organization.¹⁴⁶ 20 attacks have been at least inspired by the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in the 2010 decade so far, including the 2014 San Bernardino shooting and the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting.¹⁴⁷ This

¹⁴⁴ Jenkins, *Fifteen Years After 9/11*. 4

¹⁴⁵ Jenkins, Brian Michael. "The Continuing Lure of Violent Jihad," 2015, 5

¹⁴⁶ Jenkins, *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies*.19-21

¹⁴⁷ "Lone Wolf Attacks Are Becoming More Common -- And More Deadly | Gunned Down: The Power of the NRA | FRONTLINE | PBS | Official Site." Accessed November 30, 2018. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/lone-wolf-attacks-are-becoming-more-common-and-more-deadly/>.

data helps put the overall threat – organized and homegrown – into perspective in that there might be a high number of plots but there is a sizable reduction in the amount that are actually carried out successfully.

Trends

While reassuring, these facts do not make the United States immune to the threat of Salafist terrorism, organized or unorganized. One thing that must be made clear is that the nature of Salafist terrorism. One of the hallmark characteristics of terrorism in the pre-9/11 era was that major attacks would often be followed by smaller secondary strikes. These were determined to be “clusters” of attacks.¹⁴⁸ Terrorism in the post-9/11 era, especially that which is committed by Salafists, on average, are not as successful and are random. Smaller Salafist attacks are not predicated by a large successful strike somewhere around the globe and also have no particular pattern or increased likelihood relative to specific calendar dates.¹⁴⁹ The fact that “clusters” of attacks are not characteristic of modern Salafist terrorism may seem to be a good thing. However, in reality, the randomness of the attacks provides law enforcement and intelligence agencies no additional benefit in trying to prevent attacks from happening.

Another difference between pre-9/11 terrorism and modern Salafist terrorism is their frequency and lethality. A notable decline in the number successful attacks has been occurred

¹⁴⁸ Jenkins, Brian, Henry Willis, and Bing Han. *Do Significant Terrorist Attacks Increase the Risk of Further Attacks? Initial Observations from a Statistical Analysis of Terrorist Attacks in the United States and Europe from 1970 to 2013*. RAND Corporation, 2016.

<https://doi.org/10.7249/PE173>. 2

¹⁴⁹ Jenkins, Willis, and Han, *Do Significant Terrorist Attacks Increase the Risk of Further Attacks?* 3

with post-9/11 terrorism have far fewer attacks relative to the pre-9/11 era. *Figure 11* showcases the decline of successful attacks.¹⁵⁰

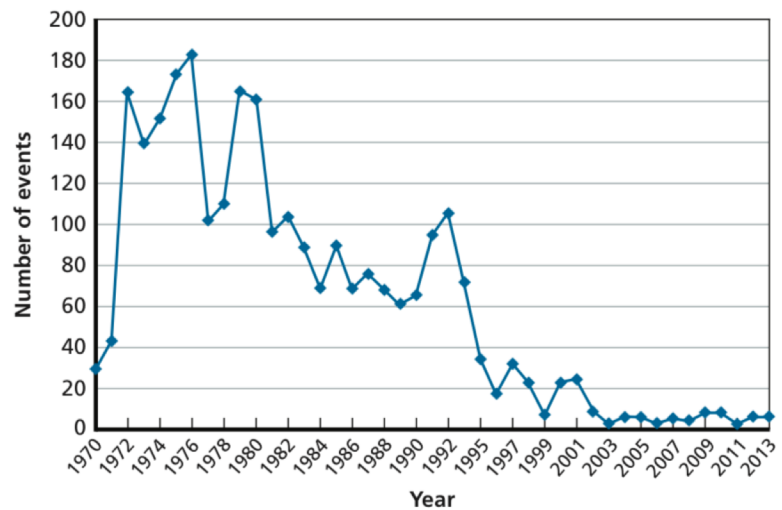
However, Brian Jenkins states,

“The decline in the volume of terrorist attacks has been offset by the greater determination of today’s terrorists, especially those inspired by jihadist ideology, to kill in quantity, which brings us to the next observation. There are fewer incidents overall, but lethality has

increased.”¹⁵¹ While this data is not limited to just the United States, the overall trends are still applicable to the threat the U.S. faces.

Figure 11

Figure 1. Number of Successful Terrorism Attacks in Western Europe and the United States



Challenges

Finally, one of the major challenges that the United States continues to face in dealing with these threats is which level of law enforcement is responsible for countering these attacks. The federal intelligence agencies obviously are responsible for preventing outside threats from entering the country, but there has emerged confusion over who is supposed to watch and prevent homegrown terrorism. Local law enforcement often complains that operationally

¹⁵⁰ Jenkins, Willis, and Han, *Do Significant Terrorist Attacks Increase the Risk of Further Attacks?* 5

¹⁵¹ Jenkins, Willis, and Han, *Do Significant Terrorist Attacks Increase the Risk of Further Attacks?* 7

relevant intelligence is kept from them by federal agencies when the potential threat is in their jurisdiction. Brian Jenkins asserts, “Local authorities continue to complain that operational threat information does not get to them and what they do see is so broad it’s ‘unactionable.’”¹⁵²

Although federal agencies like the F.B.I. have been successful in a number of sting operations for preventing homegrown terrorism, the lack of information sharing and inter-authority cooperation leaves local law enforcement handicapped at preventing homegrown threats in their jurisdiction.

The Homegrown Terrorist: Profile and Radicalization

Common Profile and Trends

Given the data for attacks in the United States, it is clear that homegrown terrorists make up a significant majority of the attacks since 9/11/2001. However, the differences between U.S. and European Muslims (both native born and immigrants) begs the question as to why some are still committing or attempting to commit attacks in the United States. Looking back at the Pew Research of U.S. Muslim opinions, it is clear that approval for tactics characteristic of organizations and actual affiliation with an organization are quite low and have been on the decline. However, the polls still showcase a large minority with negative view of U.S. foreign policy. Recall that Abdul Artan, The Ohio State University attacker, expressed overall anger and disapproval over U.S. influence abroad and how it is affecting Muslims around the world.

Indeed, Associate Professor at the Naval War College Christopher Jasparro found that asserts

¹⁵² Jenkins, Brian Michael, Andrew Liepman, Henry H Willis, and Rand Corporation. *Identifying Enemies among Us: Evolving Terrorist Threats and the Continuing Challenges of Domestic Intelligence Collection and Information Sharing*, 2014. 24

that the primary jihadist motivation for attacking the United States is anger at U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and towards Muslims.¹⁵³ This is not to say that those who disapprove of U.S. foreign policy in the Muslim world are more prone to terrorism, but simply that political disapproval is found in the motivations of homegrown terrorists.

Recall the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism's three main patterns for homegrown terrorism: common psychological disturbances, high social ineptitude or desire for societal isolation, and the distribution of ideas or manifestos before attacks.¹⁵⁴ The Centre also found political or religious ideologies were combined with personal grievances to create a strong enough motivation to attack. In addition, while some attack locations are random, those that are chosen ahead of time are chosen for specific reasons. However, they rarely represent the actual heart of the grievance the attacker is experiencing.¹⁵⁵ Carlos Bledsoe's attack is one such example where his overall anger at the U.S. military led him to attack the least defended, yet symbolic target of American military might; an undefended armed forces recruiting center in Little Rock, Arkansas.¹⁵⁶

Another trend in the homegrown profile is their tactics. According to Brian Jenkins's analysis of all jihadist plots between 2002-2010, "Bombs were the weapon of choice in most of the plots, although none of the plotters successfully built an explosive device."¹⁵⁷ As previously stated, bombs require too much planning and technical expertise to the point that it is simply not

¹⁵³ Eby, "The Nation That Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-Driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States Since 9/11." 12

¹⁵⁴ Leenaars, Jan, and Alastair Reed. "Understanding Lone Wolves: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Comparative Analysis." International Counterterrorism Centre, April 2016. 4

¹⁵⁵ Leenaars and Reed, "Understanding Lone Wolves: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Comparative Analysis." 7

¹⁵⁶ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 64

¹⁵⁷ Jenkins, *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies*. 20

feasible for someone to attempt, even with the instructions disseminated on the internet. Homegrown terrorists instead opt for cruder weapons such as firearms, cars, and knives.¹⁵⁸ Al-Baghdadi himself is quoted in saying, “If you are not able to find an IED or a bullet, then single out the disbelieving American, Frenchman, or any of their allies. Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run over him with your car, or throw him down from a high place or choke him, or poison him.”¹⁵⁹ In addition, both suicide (dying as a means to an end) and suicidal (dying as an end in itself) are both found to have been low priorities among homegrown terrorists. Eight out the ten plots between 2002 and 2010 that got to the operational stage involved the perpetrator getting away alive to commit more attacks,¹⁶⁰ further proving that homegrown terrorists lack the institutional pressure to commit suicide attacks.

In terms of their demographics, the 360 individuals charged with jihadist terrorism in the United States since 9/11 are overwhelmingly male. Their average age is 29. One-third were married with children and 12% had served prison time.¹⁶¹ Peter Bergen also found that the majority were introduced to their Salafist beliefs after a personal crisis such as a job loss, racist encounter, or death of a relative.¹⁶² Another profile that Bergen also discovered was that most of the jihadists were middle class or wealthier. This makes sense since most of the Muslims in the United States have the same economic demographics as other U.S. adults, but what is interesting is his explanation why. While European Muslim immigrants might feel resentment toward their

¹⁵⁸ Jenkins, Brian Michael. “Navigating the Latest Terrorism Trend,” December 19, 2017. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/12/navigating-the-latest-terrorism-trend.html>. 3

¹⁵⁹ Lister, Charles. *The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Evolution of Insurgency*. Oxford University Press, 2016. (289-290)

¹⁶⁰ Jenkins, *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies*. 22

¹⁶¹ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 10

¹⁶² Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America’s Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 47

inability to economically advance, American Muslims who are poor are too busy making ends meet to be drawn to terrorism. Middle class Muslims, he claims, are more vulnerable because they tend to have more disposable time and money.¹⁶³

The last major trend in conjunction with the aforementioned targeting preferences is the time of attacks. Research conducted at the Naval Postgraduate School found that the majority of homegrown terrorist attacks occurred during a weekday.¹⁶⁴ This would make sense for a number of reasons. The first reason being that the target of a homegrown terrorist (if it is one or multiple people) are more likely to be in expected places such as their place of work. This makes the task of target acquisition significantly easier for the perpetrator. The second reason is due to the mass casualty emphasis that homegrown terrorism has come to embrace since 9/11. Not only is the likelihood of hitting a specific target greater during a weekday, but the odds of collateral damage are increased simply because there is more activity during the week. The last major reason why the time of attacks matter is for media attention. Given that most media sources will be at work during the week, an attack during work hours and with mass casualties would gain greater and faster press coverage. Overall, the time of attack, along with all other contributing trends, that is common in homegrown terrorist attacks that must be noted in order to develop effective policy at countering the threat.

¹⁶³ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 49

¹⁶⁴ Eby, "The Nation That Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-Driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States Since 9/11." 30

Radicalization

Through years of study, the F.B.I. has created a model to quantify the radicalization process. Their model of radicalization consists of four main steps: pre-radicalization, identification, indoctrination, and action. Pre-radicalization is simply the time period before a vulnerable individual is contacted by or discovers radicalizing propaganda. They may have the aforementioned identity and emotional qualms but have not been exposed to any potentially dangerous information. Identification is an emotionally driven stage when a potential recruit is exposed to and begins to empathize with the information being presented either by a contact or discovered by themselves. Indoctrination occurs when a potential recruit begins to rationalize this new information into beliefs. They begin to justify it on legalistic or moralistic grounds and, in terms of Salafism, begin to have a low tolerance for deviancy from the in-group. Action is the final stage and is the point where the recruit has been fully indoctrinated to make the jump to justify violence and begins planning an operation.¹⁶⁵

Understanding the radicalization of homegrown terrorist is key in order to fully grasp the threat that homegrown terrorists in the United States present. As previously mentioned, the demographic of homegrown terrorists in the United States tend to be young men. Even with their on average wealthier status, living in a country with an aggressive anti-terrorism foreign policy such as the United States and having such a disagreement with such policies can cause a level of cognitive dissonance and identity crisis that their counterparts in Europe face. The U.S. Institute of Peace asserts that radicalization is “a complex and highly individualized process, often shaped

¹⁶⁵ Mealer, Michael J. “Internet Radicalization: Actual Threat or Phantom Menace?,” 2017, 109, 44

by a poorly understood interaction of structural and personal factors.”¹⁶⁶ This cognitive dissonance and identity crisis in homegrown terrorists is largely built upon one visceral emotion: shame.

Recall the breakdown of Suri’s *Call to Global Islamic Resistance*. The outer-most ring of the resistance composes of individuals or small cells inspired, but not directed by the inner two. Organizations like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State have begun to follow this model as their regional campaigns have been pushed back. These organizations have increasingly devoted more time in their radicalization process and have used the concept of shame as a powerful motivator. The infamous American Sheikh turned Al-Qaeda pundit Anwar Al-Awlaki is quoted in saying, “How can your conscience allow you to live in peaceful coexistence with a nation that is responsible for the tyranny and crimes committed against your own brothers and sisters.”¹⁶⁷ Capitalizing off the shame that Muslims may feel about living in the United States and reaping the benefits of a society whose government is intervening in the Middle East can certainly lead those vulnerable to such a message to be pressured into joining the global jihad against the West.

Through the use of shame and personal identity, radicalizing agents are able to develop a sort of “cognitive radicalization” in the minds of recruits where the recruits voluntarily come to the conclusions by themselves that the radicalizing agents want them to make. This process makes the recruits acquire values, attitudes, political beliefs that deviate from mainstream society in the West. In the minds of recruits, this process can manifest itself in a Salafist outlook, which, taken to its logical extension, justifies inter-group violence.¹⁶⁸ This is further bolstered by the

¹⁶⁶ Eby, “The Nation That Cried Lone Wolf: A Data-Driven Analysis of Individual Terrorists in the United States Since 9/11.” 13

¹⁶⁷ Kriner, Matthew. “Tackling Terrorism’s Taboo: Shame.” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 2 (April 30, 2018). <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/691>. 4

¹⁶⁸ Kriner, “Tackling Terrorism’s Taboo.” 2

social pressure to create a unique identity in modern society as a projection of themselves.¹⁶⁹ For those who feel shame for living in the West, Salafism provides an easy solution.

Within the context of Salafism, shame is also used as a differentiator between the in-group and the out-group. Testimony from friends and colleagues of homegrown terrorists cite that the individual would engage in oddly traditional behaviors out-of-the-blue. Carlos Bledsoe, the recruiting center attacker, avoided his parents entirely after one argument about his increased fundamentalism, started wearing traditional Middle Eastern robes, got rid of his dog because some Muslims consider dogs unclean, and legally changed his name to Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad.¹⁷⁰ Major Nidal Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, became increasingly distant from both his family and congregation in the years leading up to his attack due to his fundamentalist views on the Quran, he rebuked several date set-ups from friends because the women being introduced were not traditional enough, and he gave presentations at Walter Reed defending Osama Bin Laden and suicide bombing.¹⁷¹ All of these behaviors resulted from the fact that these individuals could not reconcile their beliefs with the society they were living in, which solidified their in-group vs out-group mentality.

Since 9/11, and increasing amount of the radicalization process has been conducted on the internet. According to Middle Eastern security official Colonel Faiz Al-Shihri, Al-Qaeda devotes upwards of 99% of its radicalization and recruitment effort towards internet

¹⁶⁹ Dawson, Lorne. "Sketch of a Social Ecology Model for Explaining Homegrown Terrorist Radicalisation." *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.19165/2017.1.01>. 7

¹⁷⁰ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 61

¹⁷¹ Bergen, *United States of Jihad: Who Are America's Homegrown Terrorists, and How Do We Stop Them?* 72-73

radicalization.¹⁷² Brian Jenkins states, “Many homegrown terrorists begin their violent journey on the internet. It is accessible to seekers, reinforcing and challenging their anger, it creates online communities of like minded extremists, it facilitates clandestine communication.”¹⁷³ The internet provides an excellent medium for such a process. The anonymity combined with instant communication allows the dissemination of such ideas to anyone with access without immediate potential repercussions like the risk of getting caught in an in-person meeting.

Furthermore, the use of internet allows radicalizing agents to customize their narrative to exactly what they want potential recruits to feel and know. Former commander of the Chicago Police Department Michael Mealer asserts, “Extremist groups recruit top-down through inspirational and informational web pages, blogs, and discussion groups, which provides the vulnerable individual with a ‘personal role, clear worldview, and a righteous purpose.’”¹⁷⁴ Refer back to the format of *Dabiq* and *Inspire* magazines. They are well put together and organized in such a way to present a variety of topics that a potential recruit might have reservations or questions about. Single issues like foreign policy are rarely strong enough alone to inspire radicalization to the point of violence. The fact that over one-third of Muslims across origin groups think the War on Terror is a war on Islam yet have such a low approval of Al-Qaeda and their tactics proves this. Therefore, radicalization requires a holistic emphasis. It must manipulate emotions, use shame and identity, and cite multiple issues as a cause for violence. The internet allows these themes to be wrapped up into a single medium that can be specifically designed to fit the desired narrative for each recruit.

¹⁷² Jenkins, *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies*. 15

¹⁷³ Mealer, “Internet Radicalization: Actual Threat or Phantom Menace?” 6

¹⁷⁴ Mealer, “Internet Radicalization: Actual Threat or Phantom Menace?” 17

Despite the apparent advantages that the internet may provide for the process of radicalization, it can be incredibly shallow. Anonymity, one of the internet's greatest strengths for this process, can be a major drawback. Author Zeynep Tufekci states, "The fact that this person will no longer be in your life in just a few minutes or hours can free you to discuss issues that might otherwise be embarrassing or have deleterious social consequences."¹⁷⁵ Essentially, anonymity can create disingenuous association. Someone who feels shame and an identity crisis that wants to be apart of something greater than themselves without much effort can find such a release in online jihadist forums because association does not inevitably mean action. Brian Jenkins asserts, "Reaching does not mean radicalizing, and radicalizing does not mean recruitment to violent jihad. The internet has facilitated access to many more recruits than al-Qaeda could reach personally, but it is low-yield mining."¹⁷⁶ Like the number of plots that actually got to an operational stage, a level of filtering occurs in the radicalization process simply because the institutional pressures are not there to fully supervise the process. While a narrative can be meticulously constructed to win over a potential recruit, at the end of the day an anonymous cursor on a web page does not have the same weight for radicalizing as an in-person interaction with a radicalized imam or a close community such as the enclaves of Europe.

Preliminary Conclusions

The threat to the United States from Salafist terrorism is low relative to Europe. A number of factors contribute to this such as geography, immigrant culture, wealth status, assimilation efforts, and counter-terrorism efforts. The 9/11 attacks exist largely as a statistical

¹⁷⁵ Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and Teargas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. Yale University Press, 2017. 172

¹⁷⁶ Mealer, "Internet Radicalization: Actual Threat or Phantom Menace?"

outlier for assessing the threat of organized terrorism to the United States. The institutional structures that must exist for a terrorist organization to pose a substantial threat simply do not exist in the United States. However, the threat of homegrown terrorism remains. A significant number of plots have been attempted since 9/11 with a few succeeding. The rapid advance of internet technology allows the dissemination of radicalizing propaganda to reach a wider audience than ever before. This, when combined with societal and identity troubles that vulnerable individuals might be facing, can be a very effective means in which to recruit a wider audience to Salafism and jihad. However, the success of radicalization is predicated for on the vulnerable individual than the radicalizing agent since the institutional pressure of radicalization for not nearly as intimate on the internet. Like the homegrown terrorists of Europe, homegrown terrorists in the United States do not often have successful attacks and when they do, they are not as devastating as organizationally planned attacks. However, even though successful attacks may not yield relatively high casualties, the difficulty of preventing them due to their individualized nature is where their true threat and lethality resides.

Conclusion

Summary

As the Middle East and parts of North Africa begin to stabilize after years of civil war following the Arab Spring, the presence of Western military forces declines, and the capabilities of organizations like the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda are fractions of what they once were, it is important to remember that the threat of Salafist Islamic terrorism is something that should not be ignored. Thousands of people in the United States and Western Europe have been killed or wounded from this phenomenon since the turn of the millennia and, despite their decline, organizations like the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda are vocal in their continued efforts to attack the West.¹⁷⁷ In many ways, Salafist terrorism changed the way in which terrorism is conducted around the world in both an organized and homegrown fashion. While occurring less, terrorism has overall become more lethal and taken on a mass casualty emphasis.¹⁷⁸

Let's quickly reexamine some key features of both types of attacks with this mass casualty emphasis. Organized attacks were, as this project viewed, attacks orchestrated, funded, trained, or otherwise overseen by a recognized terrorist organization or one of their affiliates. This project viewed any attack committed by the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, or any of their affiliates as subject to this categorization. Organized attacks typically use more advanced tactics like bombs or suicide operations, which require a certain level of intelligence, logistical capabilities, and social pressure only found in established groups. Organized attacks tend to be

¹⁷⁷ Jenkins, Brian Michael. "The Continuing Lure of Violent Jihad," 2015, 5

¹⁷⁸ Jenkins, Brian, Henry Willis, and Bing Han. *Do Significant Terrorist Attacks Increase the Risk of Further Attacks? Initial Observations from a Statistical Analysis of Terrorist Attacks in the United States and Europe from 1970 to 2013*. RAND Corporation, 2016.
<https://doi.org/10.7249/PE173>. 7

committed by individuals recruited from places that have liaisons or advocates such as radical mosques or enclaves in Europe. Lastly, organized attacks are typically deadlier than homegrown attacks, but easier to intercept due to the level of planning and logistics often required for an attack to be successful.

Homegrown terrorist attacks, as viewed by this project, were largely any other Salafist attack committed by a lone individual or small group of people. The only real qualifier is that the role of an established organization must be limited to inspiration or social pressure from propaganda or contacts with no other role in the attack. Homegrown attacks, while showing a preference for bombs, tend to use lower skilled weapons such as firearms or cars to commit the attack.¹⁷⁹ Homegrown terrorists rarely opt for suicide operations and instead would rather live to continue further attacks.¹⁸⁰ Homegrown attacks tend to target places or people that have some sort of symbolic significance, even though it is rarely representative of the actual cause for their grievances. Lastly, homegrown attacks tend to not be as devastating as organized attacks but due to the little planning required by their tactics, can be much more difficult to intercept.¹⁸¹

The Threat

Western Europe

Overall, the threat of Salafist terrorism is greater to Western Europe than it is to the United States. The 9/11 attacks have proven themselves to be more of a statistical outlier than a forerunner to the devastation that terrorism would end up bringing in the 21st Century.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Jenkins, "Navigating the Latest Terrorism Trend." 154

¹⁸⁰ Jenkins, *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies*. 22

¹⁸¹ Jenkins, "The Continuing Lure of Violent Jihad." 7

¹⁸² Jenkins, *Fifteen Years After 9/11*. 4

Excluding 9/11, the GTD demonstrates that Western Europe has experienced the brunt of the organized attacks committed by Salafist terrorism and has experienced nearly 8.3 times more terrorist attacks than the United States.¹⁸³ According to the statistical model by Thomas Hegghammer concerning returning jihadists, Western Europe has upwards of 300 potential violent returnees from the wars in the Middle East.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the number of homegrown terrorists in Europe exceeds that of the United States.¹⁸⁵ However, their overall threat has yet to be quantified due to the amorphous nature of the attacks relative to organized terrorism.

It is clear that Western Europe faces a greater Salafist terrorism threat than the United States does. It is also the conclusion of this project that the type of terrorism that poses the greatest threat to Western Europe is organized terrorism. The extremely low social and economic status of Muslims immigrants and refugees in Europe huddled together in enclaves across various countries with little oversight from state agencies allow organizational representatives or advocates to penetrate these Muslim communities as evidenced by the radical imams of London or the extremist Islamic centers in Germany. These organizational advocates play on the identity of vulnerable 2nd and 3rd generation Muslim immigrants in these communities and entice them to commit violence on behalf of an organization using more sophisticated tactics that can kill hundreds of people in a single attack. As this project has found, homegrown terrorists have yet to surpass the level of frequency combined with devastation that organized attacks can wreck on Western Europe.

¹⁸³ Jenkins, *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies*. 22

¹⁸⁴ Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" 3

¹⁸⁵ Jenkins, *Fifteen Years After 9/11*. 5

The United States

The threat of Salafist terrorism to the United States is quite low relative to the threat Western Europe faces. The immigration and assimilation culture, government counter-terrorism capabilities, and the geography of being literally an ocean away all help to mitigate this threat. Given that the 9/11 attacks are more of a statistical outlier than any predictive standard, it becomes clear that the overall threat to the United States is quite minimal. According to Brian Jenkins, less than 100 people have been killed by Salafist terrorism in the United States from post-9/11 to 2016.¹⁸⁶

In terms of the type of terrorism that poses the greater threat, homegrown terrorism has proven itself to be far greater. This is not because organized attacks are not as devastating, but because they do not occur in the United States. The GTD only recognizes one actual organized attack since 9/11 on U.S. soil and that was the failed “underwear” bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmuttalab, who only injured himself and a fellow passenger when his bomb failed to detonate.¹⁸⁷ It is simply too difficult for a terrorist organization to orchestrate an overseas attack resembling anything close to 9/11 as well as recruiting enough people within the United States to commit such attacks.

However, those people that have been killed by Salafist terrorism since 9/11 have all been killed by homegrown terrorists. All of the same limitations that characterize European homegrown terrorism such as cruder weapons and lack of planning apply to American homegrown terrorism, but so do the strengths. The attacks from Abdul Artan, Carlos Bledsoe,

¹⁸⁶ Jenkins, *Fifteen Years After 9/11*. 5

¹⁸⁷ “GTD Search Results.”

and Nidal Hasan show that sometimes a little bit of propaganda or inspiration coupled with a personal grievance is all that is necessary to commit to Salafist jihadism, which is incredibly hard to pre-emptively counter and can still achieve the status of a mass casualty attack. The only silver lining in these instances is that as the more radicalizing agents use the internet, something which can and has been monitored by intelligence agencies, a natural filtering effect occurs in that very few individuals exposed to, in contact with, or pledge allegiance to jihadism, will actually attempt to commit an attack.

Looking Forward

The goal of this project was to effectively assess the threat that Salafist Islamic terrorism poses to the United States and Western Europe in its two main forms: organized and homegrown. In making these discoveries, this project has found and made known why Europe experiences more terrorism than the United States (and visa-versa) on multiple levels ranging from public policy, social demographics, and geography. While this project is not meant to give any specific policy recommendations, it hopes to raise awareness for current public policy strengths and weaknesses that lessen or widen the currently posed threat. If public policy measures were to be adopted, it should be able address the multiple fronts that contribute to this threat as there is no one single reason behind the threat of Salafist terrorism to the United States and Western Europe. Future research should focus on gathering a firm data set, similar to the GTD, on the homegrown terrorist attacks that have occurred in the United States and Western Europe. Such a data set would be able to differentiate actual homegrown terrorism from just regular crime, provide empirical evidence of trends as they relate to homegrown terrorism and paint a clearer picture of the threat it poses.

As far as this project is concerned, the threat posed by Salafist terrorism is largely overblown, yet misunderstood. Fixating on the worst of the attacks such as 9/11 can create an inaccurate picture leading to ineffective public policy that ends up ghost-hunting instead of making the necessary changes for mitigating the threat. However, ignoring or willfully downplaying the threat can create the same lack of awareness that would allow attacks such as Paris, San Bernardino, Nice, or Manchester to rear their ugly head once more. Nuance, balance, and awareness is needed.

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